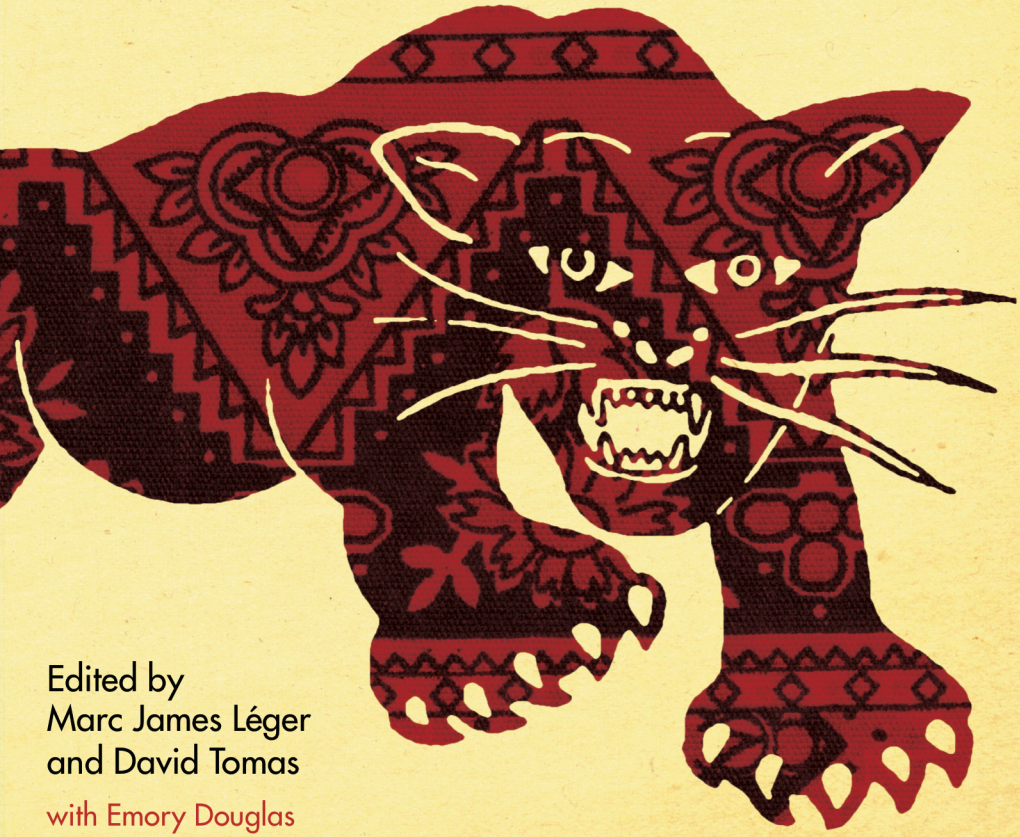
ZAPANTERA NEGRA

An Artistic Encounter Between Black Panthers and Zapatistas



Edited by
Marc James Léger
and David Tomas

with Emory Douglas
(former Minister of Culture of the Black Panther Party)
EDELO (Mia Eve Rollow and Caleb Duarte Piñon)
Rigo 23 | Saúl Kak

Art | Radicalism | Internationalism

What is the role of revolutionary art in times of distress? When Emory Douglas, former Minister of Culture of the Black Panther Party, accepted an invitation from the art collective EDELO and Rigo 23 to meet with autonomous Indigenous and Zapatista communities in Chiapas, Mexico, they addressed just this question. *Zapantera Negra* is the result of their encounter. It unites the bold aesthetics, revolutionary dreams, and dignified declarations of two leading movements that redefine emancipatory politics in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

The artists of Black Panthers and Zapatistas were born into a centuries-long struggle against racial capitalism and colonialism, state repression, and international war and plunder. Not only do these two movements offer the world an enduring image of freedom and dignified rebellion, they do so with insurgent style, putting culture and aesthetics at the forefront of political life. A powerful elixir of hope and determination, *Zapantera Negra* provides a galvanizing presentation of interviews, militant artwork, and original documents from these two movements' struggle for dignity and liberation.

"*Zapantera Negra* is an incredible endeavor, the depth of which is not often found in social practice. The subtlety and complexity of this project, and its implications for a globally engaged arts-based activism is truly impressive." —Suzanne Lacy, artist and author of *Leaving Art* and *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art*

"Open the book. Allow *Zapantera Negra* to ignite your imagination and inspire new dreams of liberated futures." —Melanie Cervantes, graphic artist and cultural worker, cofounder of Dignidad Rebelde

"*Zapantera Negra* provides a journey of heart and mind through the relationship of two critically important movements and, extending around it all, the depth and power of national liberation and internationalism." —Laura Whitehorn, former political prisoner and editor of *The War Before* by the late Safiya Bukhari

"By drawing out Black and Indigenous liberatory politics and the need for spaces to resist, conspire, and inspire, this is more than a book—it is a call to home." —Kazembe Balagoon, writer, cultural activist, and project manager at the Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung, New York office

"With hope and determination, *Zapantera Negra* shows us the power that art has to open liberatory possibilities for living unwritten futures." —scott crow, author of *Black Flags and Windmills* and *Emergency Hearts, Molotov Dreams*

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Praise for *Zapantera Negra*

"*Zapantera Negra* is a rare document from the US and Mexico that intertwines art, dialogues, and processes between artists and cultural spaces that open collaborative intersections of politics and creation far outside the confines of art as commerce and rigid politics. Blending striking images and personal stories of the Black Panther Party and the Zapatistas, the book spans revolutionary tendencies and histories rooted in collective liberation. With hope and determination, *Zapantera Negra* shows us the power that art has to open liberatory possibilities for living unwritten futures."

—scott crow, author of *Black Flags and Windmills: Hope, Anarchy and the Common Ground Collective* and *Emergency Hearts, Molotov Dreams*

"*Zapantera Negra* helps us understand the power of art, how it can be a process that restores dignity and revives radical consciousness, and the ways it can be utilized on the road to liberation and autonomy. Emory Douglas and other contributors boldly present the insurgent spirit of the Black Panther Party and the EZLN and the visual cultures that reflect people's struggle for self-determination in the context of the hypercapitalism which impacts so many of our struggles. Open the book. Allow *Zapantera Negra* to ignite your imagination and inspire new dreams of liberated futures."

—Melanie Cervantes, graphic artist and cultural worker, cofounder of Dignidad Rebelde

"With a generous spirit of dialogue and inquiry, *Zapantera Negra* sparkles! It usefully brings together Black Panther Party and Zapatista political-aesthetic sensibilities, and it opens up wonderful questions that blur the lines between art and activism. In a time of resurgent Indigenous and Black freedom struggles in North America, this book offers inspiration for building transformative movements with vitality and vision."

—Chris Dixon, activist and author of *Another Politics: Talking Across Today's Transformative Movements*

"*Zapantera Negra* provides a stunning display of why art is not just helpful but also utterly necessary to humanity's efforts to achieve justice. This book provides a journey of heart and mind through the relationship of two critically important movements and, extending around it all, the depth and power of national liberation and internationalism. As I read *Zapantera Negra*, I

felt fortunate to be able to witness these cultural creations and conversations, and to hold in my hands a history that goes beyond words and teaches truth through the alchemy of revolutionary art."

—Laura Whitehorn, former political prisoner and editor of *The War Before: The True Life Story of Becoming a Black Panther*, *Keeping the Faith in Prison*, and *Fighting for Those Left Behind* by the late Safiya Bukhari

"*Zapantera Negra* is a book of encounters—between Zapatismo and the Black Panther Party, art and politics, revolution and everyday life, and the histories and horizons of radical social justice struggles. Léger and Tomas deftly curate this engaging and important work, exploring urgent and enduring questions relating to radical politics, the fabric of daily life, and art as a medium for social justice and social change. Orbiting around a series of provocative and lively dialogues, this book embodies the spirit and politics of *encuentro*."

—Alex Khasnabish, author of *Zapatistas: Rebellion from the Grassroots to the Global* and *Zapatismo Beyond Borders: New Imaginations of Political Possibility*

"*Zapantera Negra* is an incredible endeavor, the depth of which is not often found in social practice: a direct and embodied connection between a key actor in a major social movement in US history (the Black Panthers) and the people of Chiapas, carrying the legacy and expressions of an equally revolutionary struggle in Mexico (the Zapatistas), some thirty years apart. This project, and its implications for a globally engaged arts-based activism, is truly impressive."

—Suzanne Lacy, artist and author of *Leaving Art* and *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art*

"From a place called EDELO (En Donde Era la ONU [Where the United Nations Used to Be]), somewhere in the Mexican Southeast, *Zapantera Negra* kindles the Black Panther spirit from a *caracol* in a river that runs through history—a river that runs below ground for years, for entire centuries, and then rages to the surface or trickles up through the earth's rhizomes and roots. This art is urgent and inventive, an art of uniting peoples, an art of struggle born out of a moment in time, years, even centuries in the making. *Que viva la Zapantera Negra!*"

—Jeff Conant, author of *A Poetics of Resistance: The Revolutionary Public Relations of the Zapatista Insurgency*

"This collaboration reflects the brilliant echoes of five years of resistance. From the Seminole swamps to the Southwest plains, Black and Brown hands reach together to build liberation dreams against the nightmares of racism, war, and colonialism. The depictions found in *Zapantera Negra*—the magic of Black church women and *las mujeres campesinos*; children wise beyond years and adults following their lead—show communities in struggle challenging Empire from below and to the left. By drawing out Black and Indigenous liberatory politics and the need for spaces to resist, conspire, and inspire, this is more than a book—it is a call to home."

—Kazembe Balagoon, writer, cultural activist, and project manager at the Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung, New York Office

"In *Zapantera Negra*, freedom struggles find common expression through culture. Through interviews, conversations with Emory Douglas, and political platforms, this wide-ranging collaboration considers the aesthetic resonance between the Zapatistas and Black Panther Party. Richly illustrated with murals, embroideries, archival images—and even a spaceship—the book explores how 'living memory' can alight upon new spaces and generate new realities. This is a beautiful testament to hope and dignity and an urgent reminder that radical futures must be imagined before they can be realized. The struggle against neoliberalism requires such fortitude as well as such imagination."

—Christina Heatherton, coeditor of *Policing the Planet: Why the Policing Crisis Led to Black Lives Matter* and author of the forthcoming *The Color Line and the Class Struggle: The Mexican Revolution, Internationalism, and the American Century*

"*Zapantera Negra* is a marvelous and illuminating exploration that sheds penetrating light on the borderlands of Mexico and the United States of America. As I read this fascinating book, my mind gravitated instantaneously to my own book on this related topic, reminding me once more of shared Black and Brown histories and landscapes of struggle. These enlightening pages remind us of the commonalities between the Black Panthers and the Zapatistas, and through image and word, point us all to a brighter and more bountiful tomorrow."

—Gerald Horne, author of *Black and Brown: African-Americans and the Mexican Revolution, 1910–1920* and *Race to Revolution: The U.S. and Cuba During Slavery and Jim Crow*

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Omar Inzunza Perez (Gran OM), Zapantera Negra poster showing the two half faces of Zapatismo and the Black Panther Party, created for encuentro, November 2012. Courtesy of EDELO.

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THANKS ARE DUE TO THE Leonard & Bina Ellen Art Gallery, Concordia University, and its Director Michèle Thériault for hosting the exhibition *Zapantera Negra* as well as providing facilities for the interviews with Emory Douglas, Mia Eve Rollow, and Saúl Kak. Thanks to the latter for an inspiring series of meetings and to Caleb Duarte Piñon and Rigo 23 for following up on these with further insights on the story of Zapantera Negra. Thanks to Malav Kanuga and everyone at Common Notions who supported this project from the start and understood its contribution to creative militant research.

Thanks to Emory Douglas for the permission to reprint his revised "Position Paper on Revolutionary Art" and to Billy X Jennings and the Black Panther Party archives for invaluable research material, including the 1966 "Black Panther Party for Self-Defense Ten-Point Program" (modified March 29, 1972) as well as the "Outline of Responsibilities by Rank and File for Black Panther Party Members" (itsabouttimebpp.com). The "Fourth Declaration of the Lacandón Jungle" and "Sixth Declaration of the Lacandón Jungle" were sourced from Wikipedia under a Creative Commons 3.0 license and cross-referenced with other versions. EZLN materials are not copyrighted. Marcos'

"The Other Player" was sourced from Subcomandante Marcos, *Our Word Is Our Weapon*, ed. Juana Ponce de Léon (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2001), which stipulates that the original works of Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos are not copyrighted. In keeping with the wishes of the editors of *Our Word Is Our Weapon*, royalties from this publication have been donated to EDELO for future solidarity projects.

EDELO would like to thank the following communities, organizations and individuals for their participation, support, and creativity, which helped form the Zapantera Negra project. We recognize that our process is slow and at times mixed with a chaotic urgency associated with the process of "not knowing." This is in the spirit of the Zapatista walk and of artistic process. This work—and its associated cultural movements, communities and individuals—is a clear testament of human endurance, beauty, creation, and celebration that stands in confident parallel to the violent systems that discourage it. We thank the following for allowing us to be witnesses to that extraordinary act of creation: Iztali BiNeza Duarte Martinez, Caracol Morelia, Caracol Ovantic, Colectivo de Bordados Zapatistas, Familia de Pintores Zapatistas Morelia, Las Escuelitas Zapatistas, Comunidad Moises Ghandi, Comunidad Elambo Bajo, Universidad De La Tierra, Doctor Raymundo, Juan Gallo, Omar Inzunza, Regina Galindo, Santiago Mazatl, Grafitti Poetico, Jose Luis, Antun Vaz, Manik B, Muk' Ta Nab, Aureliano M. Gutierrez, Santiago Armengod, Piña Palmera, Bartolo Martinez, Banlu Lu, Jacobo Alejandro Lagos Melendez, Brenda Obregon, Santiago Marcial, Jaguar De Madera, Favianna Rodriguez, Montserrat Blanco, Carla Astorga, Rael Myrick-Hodges, Paliakate, Centro del Instituto Hemisférico, Diana Taylor, Concordia University, Doris Difarnecio, Rosy Velasco, Grace Remington, Veronique Herbert, Pablo Milan, Florencia Niz, Mercy Verdugo, Jay Davis, Ramiro Martinez, RafaSz, Cindy Urrutia with California State University Fresno, David and Laurie Duarte and Pinta. A special thanks to our Kickstarter supporters.

PREFACE

Marc James Léger and David Tomas

ZAPANTERA NEGRA IS A PROJECT defined by the social, cultural, and political experiences of several art activists who brought together the ideological and aesthetic frameworks of the Zapatistas and Black Panthers. The project coalesced around the alternative architectural site known as EDELO (En Donde Era la ONU [Where the United Nations Used to Be]), a centripetal community and artistic space of collective activities and freewheeling creation founded by Caleb Duarte Piñon and Mia Eve Rollow in 2009 in San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas, Mexico.

This book is a medium for those experiences as they reveal the various social spaces that are negotiated through Zapantera Negra, from the Black Arts Movement and the anticolonial, revolutionary politics of the Panthers, to Indigenous cosmology and the communal struggles of the Zapatistas. Voiced and refracted through interviews and personal recollections, and depicted through poetic fantasy and artistic self-determination, the different elements of this book come together to assert an optimistic resistance to social and cultural repression, economic austerity, and police impunity. The origin of this book was the presentation of Zapantera Negra at the Leonard & Bina Ellen

Art Gallery, Concordia University, from June 21 to June 28, 2014. This exhibition, with its varied program of artworks, discussions, and workshops, unfolded in the context of Encuentro IX: *MANIFEST! Choreographing Social Movements in the Americas*, organized by New York University's Instituto Hemisférico de Performance & Política [Hemispheric Institute of Performance and Politics].

It was during this exhibition that we recorded a compelling and altogether out of the ordinary presentation by Emory Douglas, Saúl Kak, and Mia Eve Rollow. We consequently interviewed these three participants in EDELO's Zapantera Negra, and they discussed the basis of their artistic collaboration in resistance and the myriad aspects of social and political engagement through culture. Their presentation is reproduced here in full as are the two interviews that we conducted with them at the Leonard & Bina Ellen Art Gallery. This material is complemented by the addition of a text by Rigo 23 and an interview with Caleb Duarte Piñon. After the first main section, a second section of documents allows for a comparison of the political platforms of the Zapatistas and Black Panthers with texts that reflect the various ways in which this political material has been translated into ideas concerning cultural production.

The book's presentation and the interactions between interviews, source texts, and visual documents is designed to provide an experience that exceeds what one might expect from a straightforward documentary history. Its different elements detail a viable sociopolitical practice on the Left that opposes those that currently animate the contemporary neoliberal universe and its hegemonic consumer-based economies. In solidarity with its contributors, whose kind collaboration made this book possible, *Zapantera Negra* presents a heterogeneous, intergenerational road map for a transcontinental culture of creation, providing insights into the ways in which different traditions of political art and social activism can be fused together in the service of emancipatory social change.

INTRODUCTION

EDELO

IN 1994 THE ZAPATISTA UPRISING, a Mexican Indigenous movement from the southern state of Chiapas, produced and leveraged a new form of revolutionary communication through the Internet. The distribution of information, actions, images, and video spread throughout the world in real time, bringing awareness while building solidarity for what the *New York Times* called "the first postmodern revolution." Positioning itself as a struggle against neoliberalism and waged against five hundred years of oppression, Zapatismo has employed new technologies of information distribution in order to articulate its wants and beliefs to a global audience.

In the fall of 2009, over one hundred displaced Indigenous community members occupied the offices of the United Nations, located in San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas, Mexico. The offices were taken over in the hope of gaining international attention from humanitarian organizations. After a few months of the occupation, the United Nations simply decided to find another building and moved.

A few months later, Mia Eve Rollow and Caleb Duarte Piñon, disillusioned with institutional art and wishing to believe that art can be a radical form of communication, moved into the building and estab-

lished an experimental art space and international artist residency for diverse practices. We invited artists, activists, cultural workers, inventors, gardeners, PhDs, jugglers, and educators to take part in creating an experiment in art and social change. Disenchanted with the linear path of art history, these artists came to EDELO (En Donde Era la ONU [Where the United Nations Used to Be]) in favor of art as a vehicle for social transformation. Inspired by the Zapatista uprising, where words and poetry are used to inspire a generation to imagine 'other' possible worlds, EDELO retained the name of the UN office as part of an investigation into how art, in all its disciplines and contradictions, can take the supposed role of such institutional bodies to create understanding, empathy, and to serve as a tool for imagining alternatives to a harmful and violent system that we do not have to accept.

Zapantera Negra gathered the visual results of four encounters, between 2012 and 2014, between the Black Panthers and Zapatistas and guided by the works and presence of Emory Douglas, the former Minister of Culture of the Black Panther Party. For this encounter, Emory teamed up with Zapatista women embroidery collectives, Zapatista farmers and painters, and with local artists, activists, and musicians to create new works that reflect and celebrate these two powerful movements. Although each movement presents a distinct position in terms of cultural and political milieus, they both build on a shared understanding of the power of art. After a series of public interventions, installations, video art, performances, mural paintings, lectures, and after living and working with Zapatista families, Zapantera Negra presents a collection of works that were ignited collectively by the public's desire and need to demonstrate, protest, and create. In times of much revolutionary fever and economic inequality, we feel it is important to share what art can do, and has already done, to create change

Such a radical break is represented by the creation of the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense in 1966 and the artworks created by

Emory Douglas for its newspaper. At its peak in 1970, four hundred thousand copies of *The Black Panther* newspaper were distributed weekly throughout the United States. Within its pages, Emory published his artworks in an effort to "illustrate conditions that made revolution seem necessary [and to] construct a visual mythology of power for people who felt powerless and victimized." The newspaper and its accompanying illustrations played a central role in the articulation of the "What We Want, What We Believe" portion of the Black Panthers' Ten-Point Program. The *Black Panther Party* newspaper helped to establish a Black Panther aesthetic of Black Power and Revolution.

Although the Black Panther and the Zapatista movements occurred in distinct cultural, political, and historical milieus, the two share a common appreciation of the power of the image and the written word to translate their respective social movements into personal, collective, transformative, and public experiences. In contrast to the strong self-definition established and disseminated by these two movements via media channels, today's multimedia, plugged-in landscape seems to promote social indifference. In opposition to this ambient apathy as well as the 'high art' practices taught by leading institutions, Zapantera Negra is a project that demonstrates how contemporary art can sidestep conventional political and conceptual performance practices by working in communities of struggle from the ground up. Zapantera Negra is a grassroots effort to bring together two very powerful visual and political social movements.

EDELO in Chiapas. A small group of artists and activists join in the encounter to create a mural in the Zapatista territory called El Caracol de Morelia, Chiapas, Mexico. Top row, starting second from the left: Saúl Kak, Caleb Duarte Piñon, and Emory Douglas. Photo by Mia Eve Rollow.

ENCOUNTERS

ZAPANTERA NEGRA DIALOGUES

ZAPATISTA BLACK PANTHER PROJECT, PRESENTATION BY MIA EVE ROLLOW, EMORY DOUGLAS, AND SAÚL KAK. HOSTED BY THE LEONARD & BINA ELLEN ART GALLERY, CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY, JUNE 27, 2014.

Emory Douglas: My name is Emory Douglas, former Minister of Culture of the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense from 1966 until 1982. Zapantera Negra is a project I was invited to participate in and was designed to show the aesthetics of both the Zapatista and Black Panther movements. I was invited by EDELO to be a part of Zapantera Negra, which many creative folks have been a part of and so you could say I was a speck of dust in the whole of everything that has taken place.

Mia Eve Rollow: I am blessed to be here and to be part of the Zapantera Negra project. My name is Mia Eve and I am cofounder of EDELO, an experimental artists' residency in San Cristóbal de las Casas in Chiapas that began in 2009. For several years we had the pleasure of working

with amazing people from all paths of life, particularly Zapatista artists, as well as Emory Douglas.

Saúl Kak: My name is Saúl Kak. I come from a small community in Chiapas, a few hours away from San Cristóbal de las Casas. I would like to give a hello to everyone and say that I am very grateful for being here. I'm from a millenarian culture called Zoque, the original ones from Mesoamerica. Zoque is born from the shell of the river. This represents the beginning and the infinite. I introduce myself to you in this way because I want to speak about the other people from the land and how they view art and how they fight. For us the land is Mother Earth as well as the jaguar. All of the rivers that have the jaguar give us life. For many centuries my people have been mistreated and persecuted. When someone destroys or exploits Mother Earth it is only for the interests of very few and those people are destroying the life of Mother Earth. For example, when we contaminate Mother Earth, we are cutting off its life. When we hurt someone who is from Mother Earth, we as well are cutting life. In this world, in this life, in this Mother Earth, as well as in this time, there is inequality. Only a few have everything. Those who have everything have been keeping the others down. They have been hurting them and exploiting them and giving them bruises. There comes a time when we need to say that is enough. We need to fight. We need to struggle. It is our Mother that they are hurting, the

Emory Douglas and Saúl Kak, *I Am We [Yo Soy Nosotros]*, 2012.
Created by Emory for EDELO's inaugural Zapantera Negra exhibition in 2012.
Courtesy of EDELO.

EDELO, *No Morira La Flor De La Palabra*, 2014.
Zapatista poems and imagery remixed by EDELO. Courtesy of EDELO.

Mother that they are cutting the life of. For this I am here with you to give you this message from the original Mesoamerican people so that we can dream and create a better world where we can all fit.

Mia: When the Zapantera project began we did a small fundraiser. [Mia shows a video. Emory and Mia then comment on slides showing the projects that they worked on in Chiapas.]

Emory: Omar Perez, a great artist from Mexico City, is the one who designed the Zapantera Negra poster for the exhibition. At the beginning of my work with EDELO I was asked to brainstorm ideas for a slogan to be used as a theme that expressed solidarity. At first I said "All Power to the People" and "Each One Teach One," which were slogans that we used in the Black Panther Party. Then I quoted the poetry book *Insights and Poems* by Ericka Huggins, a founding member of the Black Panther Party, and from Huey Newton, the cofounder. I mentioned the slogan "I am We," and they thought that slogan really expressed the connection between the Zapatistas and the Black Panther Party. For the opening night ceremony, EDELO had a shaman and his family perform an amazing offering ceremony for the exhibition. The exhibition theme, "I am We," was reflected in the displayed embroideries that the several Zapatista Mayan women collectives created by taking and remixing seven of my art images and using Zapatista expressions and interpretations. The "I am We" banner that was displayed as well

as all of the amazing Zapatista artwork and the overall body of artistic expression in the exhibition made for a really awesome opening night and exhibit.

Mia: Jose Luis is one of the Zapatista artists we work with. He was born in 1994 and so was born into the revolution. He is native to the poetry of resistance and the path to a better world. He and his family are regular residents and have welcomed us into their community.

Emory: On the way to Morelia they wanted me to take a picture of a sign that indicated that this is liberated territory. It says "United Campesinos for the Resistance—This is Occupied Territory—The Autonomous Region." I asked them what that star represents and they said it means "occupied territory." Prior to my arrival some of my images had been remixed by Caleb Duarte Piñon and some of his students.

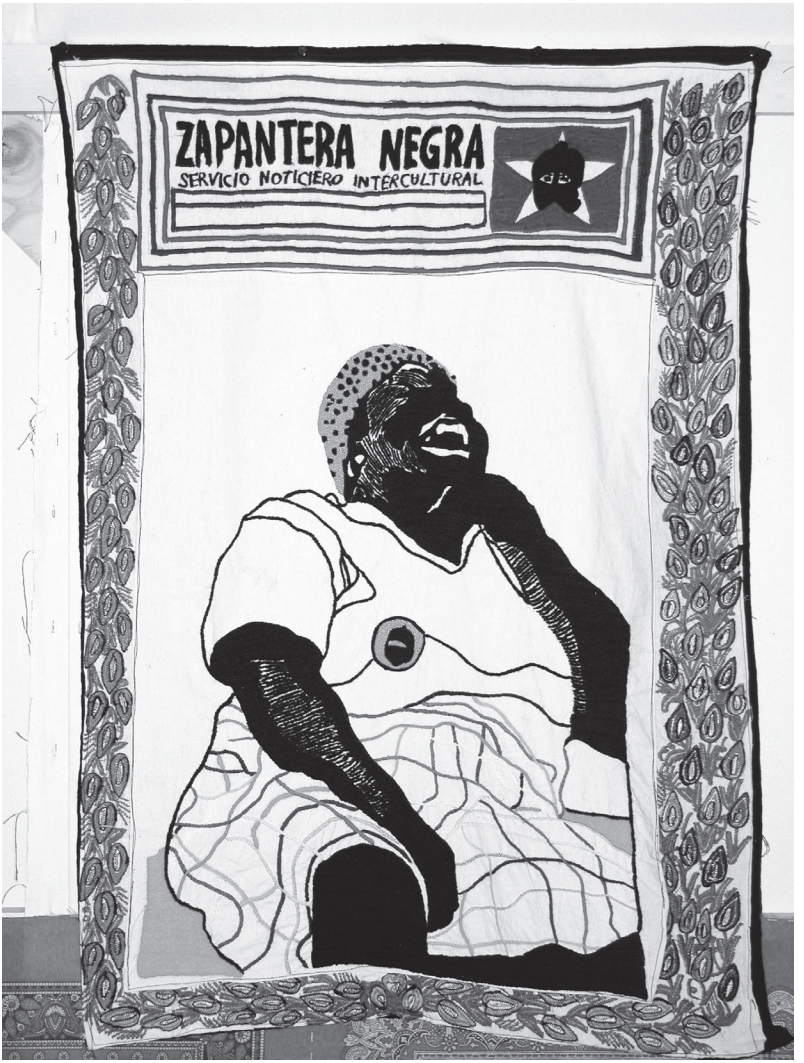
Mia: There are five *caracoles* in Chiapas. *Caracol* means snail shell. The Zapatistas name their centers of government—'Good Government'—the caracol.

Emory: When I went for the first time in 2012 to do the residency I stayed for a short period of time. Both of my visits were maybe two

These embroideries were created in 2012 by Zapatista women's embroidery collectives. The project was initiated by EDELO, who invited Lorena Sanchez, a Zapatista embroidery artist from the Municipality of Morelia in Chiapas, to live and work at the EDELO residency for the Zapantera Negra project. After a three-week introduction to the work of Emory Douglas, Sanchez returned to her community to create these works with her family and the collective, interpreting Emory's works through a colorful Zapatista lens. Caleb Duarte Piñon routinely visited the community for the next six months and later invited Sanchez to EDELO for Emory's visit and for the inauguration of the Zapantera encounter. The embroideries are interpretations of works that Emory made for *The Black Panther* newspaper between 1967 and 1972. Photos by Rosika Desnoyers.

SOMOS LA DIGNIDAD REBELDE Y EN REBELDIA

ZAPANTERA NEGRA
SERVICIO NOTICIERO INTERCULTURAL
¡VIVA LA GLOBALIZACION DE LA REVELDIA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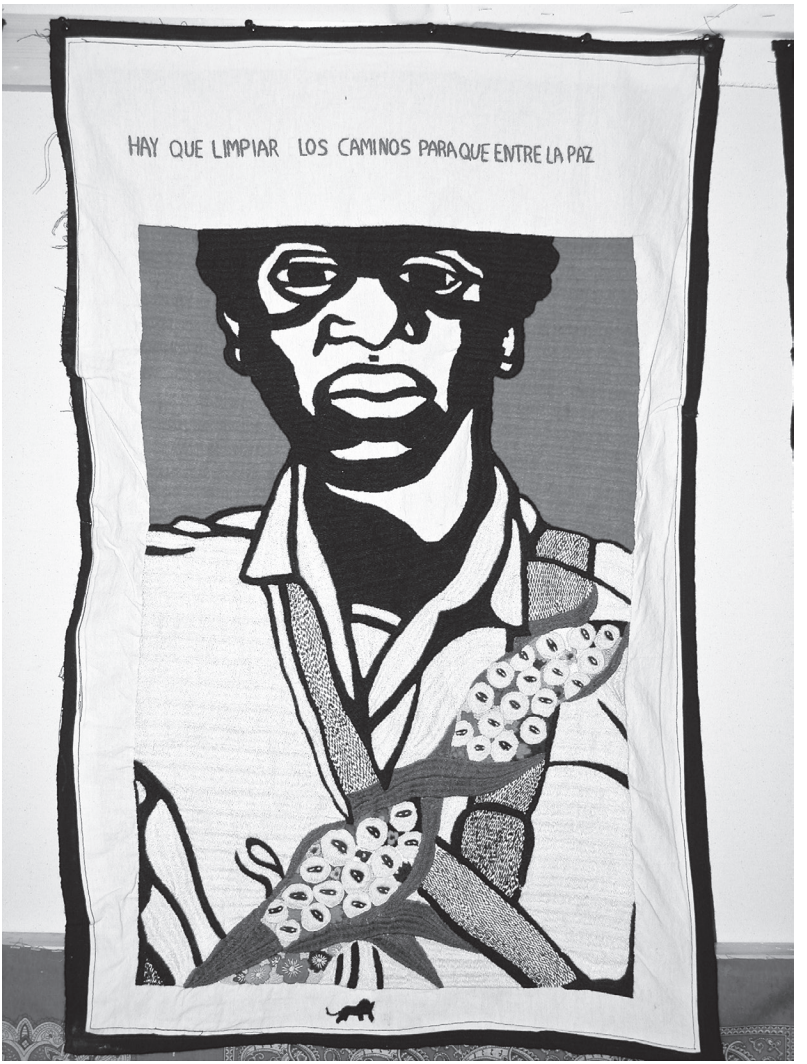

HAY QUE LIMPIAR LOS CAMINOS PARAQUE ENTRE LA PAZ

LA REBELDIA SE GLOBALIZA CADA DIA

ZAPANTERA NEGRA
SERVICIO NOTICIERO INTERCULTURAL
TE YA TZI'K JW O'COLT'IK JA'NA'IL
EL MAL QUE HAY
EN EL MUNDO ES
DONDE HAY EL CAPITALISMO.
Hay:
Explotación, injusticia,
desigualdad, domi-
nacion.
No vale nada la vida si
esta la vida asi.
HAY QUE ROMPER ESA
CADENA EZLN

and a half to three months overall, but it had an impact on me that continues to this very day.

Mia: At Morelia different artists participated in this particular encuentro, with people from Chiapas, Mexico City, San Francisco, and different small communities working in all media: 2D, performance, and graphics. They are thinkers and visionaries—just crazy people in general.

Emory: Everywhere I went I saw amazing artwork on buildings. When we went to Morelia we thought we were going there to do some painting, but they sent us to an autonomous Zapatista school to paint a particular structure. We had to bring everything in—paints, sleeping bags, everything we needed. They can't afford to offer you those things, but they can offer you a lot of compassion and love. We had enough paint to make it look aesthetically pleasing and attractive.

Mia: At that location we weren't allowed to take any photos of the Zapatistas because they were working with us without their *pasamontañas* [balaclava] or *paliakates* [bandana], and more abstractly, because in Chiapas, when you take someone's picture, the people believe it takes part of their spirit away from them.

Emory: When the youngsters were finished with their responsibilities they would come in and out all night long. In the back there were three youngsters who had a book about Che Guevara and they were talking about how they were going to do a picture. The next day, when we woke up, they had made an amazing picture of Che. Mercy gave them some paper and asked them to jot down their ideas of what they would want to create. One by one, bit by bit, they would come in and contribute something. We ate what they ate: corn in the morning, tortillas, and beans. I was also invited to an Indigenous international conference that they held in Chiapas on December 25, 2012. They

Zapantera school at Morelia, with Panther and Zapatista mural by Omar Perez (Gran OM). Courtesy of EDELO.

asked me to give a twenty-minute presentation on my involvement in the Black Panther Party. My daughter traveled with me and introduced me at the conference.

[Presentation of a recorded speech by Emory's daughter, Meres-Sia Gabriel: *I speak these words in solidarity with the Zapatista community—may they please the ancestors. Long before Spain invaded the Americas, with shiploads of enslaved Africans, before America was called America, and Africa was called Africa, when a snail was just a snail and a panther was just an animal, historians write of an ancient Mayan-African relationship, one of trading and exchanging ideas, cultures, goods, and more. Some archaeologists go further. They write that before Mayans and Africans traded, before they were two distinct people, they were one. When I heard that my father would present on the legacy of the Black Panther Party for this symposium, I felt an impulsive reaction to attend, an ancient call-*

Zapantera school at Morelia. Painting of Che Guevara by local children. Courtesy of EDELO.

ing urging me: "Be there! Let your presence be testimony to the ancestors, that your spirit remembers a time before colonization, subjugation, and plantations." Before Zapatistas took to the mountains in Chiapas, and the Panthers to the streets in the US, before we were revolutionaries, fighting our own distinct battles in different countries, before there was you and I there was we, and we were one.)

Emory: On our way to Morelia, we stopped by a Zapatista grocery store where we would eventually create artwork on the exterior façade. Caleb introduced me to the Zapatistas there and made sure that everything was okay for us to come back and do the artwork. When we did go back a little over a year later, in January 2014, we started a mural painting and an installation of a rainbow made from pieces of scrap wood that was installed on the roof of the store along with a cone-like structure created by Mia with some Zapatista dolls attached to it. The

Zapantera school at Morelia. Painting of Subcomandante Marcos. The text can be translated as "We are the hope, and we will change the world." Courtesy of EDELO.

themes reflected in the mural artwork were production, culture, health, and education.

Mia: Zapantera Negra was shown in the Mission Cultural Center in San Francisco in the exhibition *Resurfacing*. It was a multimedia mapping of the confluence of international reverence for water that connected problem-solving strategies through provocative art from Palestine to Chiapas to the Bay Area.

Emory: We were first invited to San Francisco State. We also presented at the East Side Arts Alliance, which is a multicultural center in Oakland, where we also gave presentations in high schools and at many other locations.

Mia: Creating part of the work was important for Emory. He shared ideas in discussions with young students and different autonomous communities in Chiapas as well, both at EDELO and with various platforms that were created for him in universities, cultural centers, radio stations, and for some short documentaries.

Emory: The Black Panther Party was an urban inner-city organization, fighting for land, justice, peace, and self-determination, whereas the Zapatistas are Indigenous, fighting for self-determination, land, justice, and peace. That's the historical link between the Black Panther Party and the Zapatistas: the ongoing struggle for self-determination and defining our destinies for ourselves. Out of that comes the inspiration for the artwork. Out of that comes the connection between the aesthetics of both movements. All of those things come into play. Out of that resistance comes the spirit of what we represent.

Audience: Could you say something about how things are going for you in Chiapas? Are you noticing an impact from the projects that you have been undertaking?

Emory: Yes, it's been having an impact. People always want to know where the project is going and where it's been displayed. Right now I'm trying to work on some things in Houston, and Caleb has had some responses from Los Angeles. The project is broadening to involve new aspects, for example the cause of Zapatista political prisoners—the former Black Panther Party still has political prisoners—and the question of self-determination. There's been music created by Manic B, who made a record titled *Zapantera*. And so it's involving a lot of young people who have been inspired by it, and through that inspiration there is greater awareness of what's going on. There's the excitement of it but

at the same time there are those who can be informed, enlightened, and educated. Art is the language we use to communicate with people.

Audience: I'm wondering if there is any concern that the artwork gets looked at as art only and that the cause gets left behind?

Emory: That can happen in some cases, you know. Nothing is absolute, but you have to be vigilant in relation to communicating the message of what it represents symbolically, to make sure that the message stays on point whenever that's humanly possible. In interviews, for example, you might be able to do that. There are always going to be some aspects of our work that will be looked at in the terms of art for art's sake.

Audience: But it tends to travel mostly to art centers. . .

Emory: Well, it travels mostly to community centers. It went to San Francisco State, which is where one of the first ethnic studies departments started, with the first Black Student Union (BSU), and that's where they had all of the rebellions in the sixties. Many students who came out of there came into the Black Panther Party. A lot of the professors there had the "Each One Teach One" philosophy of the Black Panther Party. They required that those students who carried on the struggle in the BSU and the student unions, who were going to mentor the new ones coming in, continue with the knowledge of the movement. So you have consciousness at the schools with the students who come through these programs. They have a whole reservoir of information there. Each year in the recent past they brought in high school students from all over the area and they had activists come in and give workshops and presentations to the students for the whole day.

Audience: Do you seek out places to present the work or do you get invited? Could you imagine refusing to present in certain places?

Emory: That hasn't happened yet but it's always a possibility! [laughs]

Mia: Emory says he's on Facebook because he likes to imagine that the people who are censoring Facebook can see what he puts up and maybe there's a chance they will become enlightened. [laughs]

Audience: You're an optimist?!

Emory: Well, I tell you, when we went to Sacramento on May 2, 1967, to observe the legislature, when they were passing gun laws, because the Panthers were now carrying guns—there is a video of when we were being arrested at a filling station—and the newsmen were asking us questions, but because we had a directive to not respond to the reporters' questions, I said "Read the flyer, it will tell you what we're about." Decades later this same newsman came up to Billy X Jennings, who is an archivist now for the Black Panther Party, and that newsman said that he was enlightened more than he had ever been about the Black Panther Party because he read the literature. He said that if he had never read the literature, at that particular time, he would never have known what the Black Panther Party was about—beyond what they were saying to try to demonize us in the news.

Audience: I can add to that. I feel that in communities that are so underrepresented around the world, especially when they're struggling for self-determination, like you said, any little bit of awareness that you can extend to the wider community, whether it's through an art center or something that may seem like it has nothing in common with it—it's still something that is giving your message a wider reach, because stories like what's happening with the Zapatistas, in Palestine, and different parts of the world where there's constant misrepresentation in the media—any little bit of truth that can come out makes a difference to those communities.

Audience: Mia, there's something that I learned from watching the documentation you posted on the EDELO website. There is a NAFTA specialist who talks about Chiapas and the fact that despite the Zapatista uprising neoliberalization in Mexico has caused the Indigenous communities to become increasingly dependent, now about 40 percent dependent, on outside companies for their seeds. Is that correct and could you say more about that?

Mia: I think Saúl could better talk about this issue.

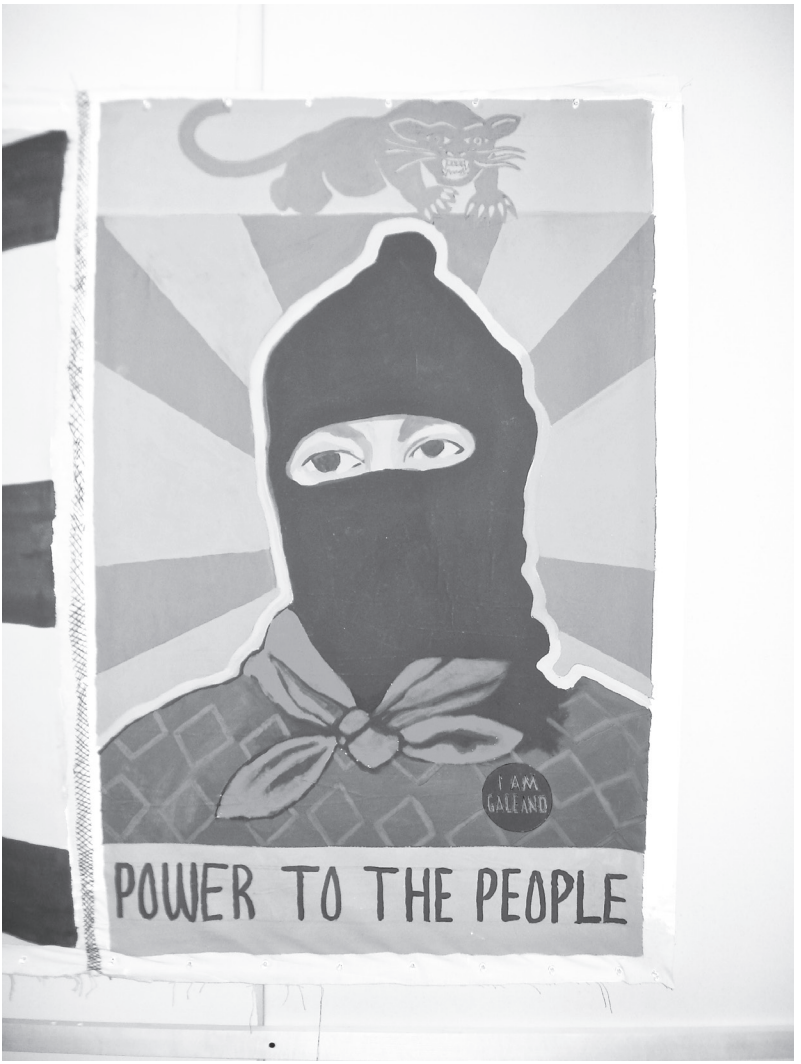
Saúl: There are many people who want to speak badly about the Zapatista movement. You have to understand that there have been more than five hundred years of exploitation. In all that time there was a system that did not want to see the people. The resources were always exploited. It is true that the original people have always had a connection with the land. This connection will never be broken because for us it represents Mother Earth. Mother Earth gives us food to eat. If you protect the land, the land will give you food. It's a reciprocal relationship. There is also a spiritual connection. I have also heard these words, that the Zapatista communities are not bringing to fruition what they say they are but this is not true. They are working, they are producing, and they continue to do so in the community, in solidarity. The government has continued to try to create programs that will undermine Zapatista autonomy and that will generate a fractured system in the communities. This is happening more so in communities that are not Zapatista. Where I'm from, we originally worked in the community. When the government created this privatization agenda, they began to create divisions, egotism, and other problems. The strategy of the government has been to ruin the movement of the people, to destroy the struggle of the Zapatista brothers.

Mia: When there is conflict and violence, it may seem on the surface that things are not going well, but in the sick world we are born into, we realize it can also mean that the people have hope. It means that the people are fighting for a dignified life. So it always begins with violence, but it's actually a transformation towards light. That video is on the EDELO website.

Emory: There's another good documentary, *A Place Called Chiapas*, which you can see on YouTube. That was before Subcomandante Marcos changed his name. He's now one of the many who go by the name Subcomandante Insurgente Galeano, the school teacher who was killed when the Zapatistas were attacked. He explains how he and the Zapatistas had tried to figure a way out of the cult of the individual. What they did historically, and what he learned from a teacher with whom he traveled over the years, was taken from the example of a revolutionary figure at the turn of the century who took on the name of another individual: Pancho Villa. When he became famous, the name became famous, but he lived in the spirit of a comrade who had been killed. By taking on that name you can keep it alive and keep the spirit alive. Pancho Villa was not famous, he was just an individual, but the person who took on his name became famous. Pancho Villa lived through him, his comrade. So in that way Subcomandante Marcos has taken on the spirit of Campesino Galeano. He says we are all Galeano.

Audience: I know that sometime in the late 1960s the Panthers were looking for the United Nations to recognize the situation of Black people in the inner cities. Just a few days ago the UN recognized that what is happening in Detroit, with the city cutting water off from people's houses, is a violation of UN treaty.

Saúl Kak, portraits of Subcomandante Marcos and Comandante Ramona, painted during EDELO residency in 2012. I AM GALEANO buttons painted by Emory Douglas in 2014. Photos by Marc James Léger.


I AM
GALEANO
POWER TO THE PEOPLE

Emory: Yes, basic quality of life, human rights. As a matter of fact we took a delegation of Panthers to the United Nations in 1967. There was also the issue of whether Blacks wanted to be part of the United States or whether they wanted to secede and gain their independence. Those were the kinds of questions that were being thrown around and we went to the UN to see if we could get some discussion and debate on those issues at that particular time.

Audience: I was just wondering if you knew if there were other instances of UN criticism of the United States' domestic policy or if this is unprecedented since the sixties.

Emory: I think they stated something at some time about the prison system, in relation to the warehousing of prisoners, particularly people of color in prisons in the United States. I've heard the UN say some things on that, yes. However, it still comes down to what 'we the people' do inside the country, in terms of whether we want to change some things. It's always good that people are being enlightened by discussing issues, but there is still the need for practice and what activists do and what the people do in the communities, getting together, transforming, which is going to be a long process. I think a lot of people are now frustrated because you have over one million people who have lost their homes, and you still have millions more who are losing their homes. You've got businesses now that are foreclosing—they'll never open again. You have all that going on now. You've got schools that are closing, but the military budgets are getting bigger. All the military hardware that they had in Afghanistan is now being sent out to local police departments—all the military vehicles, all the heavy machinery. It's obvious that they envision something happening. It's happening everywhere. And when you look at it, you look at it from the standpoint of when you take the oath. They want people who are in govern-

ment and in policy to take the oath. When they take the oath they're supposed to be going to do the people's business, but when they take the oath, they take an oath to shut up and not talk about certain things that are going on in government. And if they do they blacklist them, or they push them to the back, and that's why you have destructive politicians today, because the oath is not the oath for the people, it's the oath to rob and steal, to take the people's wealth and what belongs to them. We've got an economy that's 63 percent based on war, and that amounts to 53 percent more than the GNP of all other countries in the world combined.

Audience: Do you think that communist parties are a possible solution?

Emory: Any 'ism' can be a useful solution if it's working for the people. We can say communist parties, we can say socialism, we can say any of them, but if any 'ism' don't work, then the people ain't gonna listen to it. [laughs] You see what I'm saying? So it has some things to it, but as you know there are contradictions in everything. It can be pleasant and it can be unpleasant. If there's no contradiction, there's no way for things to grow. If people don't do something and don't talk about it, then it just deteriorates. It's a possibility. What people are looking for is humanism. Human is a better word than any 'ism.' It's about being human and treating each other with respect. With respect there's the possibility of doing something that betters the quality of life for everyone. But right now it's about exploitation and corporate greed. It has nothing to do with just everyday folks.

Audience: It seems though that the idea of communism is very useful for the Right as a possible threat, as something to be worried about, even though in reality, in North America, there isn't very much of a chance for it, even among leftists.

Emory: Well, you have on the West Coast a socialist who just got elected—Kshama Sawant—so that means that ideas are changing how people look at things. But I see what you're saying because I remember when the Black Panthers were invited to mainland China in 1973. Huey Newton had gone there before, and he was asked if he could send a delegation. We sent a diverse multicultural delegation: some lawyers, some Panthers, some teachers, and everything else. And we stayed there for 31 days. When I was a kid they had you thinking that the Chinese were devils with horns, but they were just human beings like we are. They're no different. The people ain't the enemy. But they have you believe this. This is the propaganda machine that they have you believing and hating people based on what they say.

I encourage young people to travel. Travel wherever you can and you'll get to see what's going on, and you'll get some ideas, particularly if you get on the ground and you talk to people, like, for example, when I went to Australia I asked if they had private prisons there and they said yes. They said Bechtel is privatizing prisons there. What's the rate of incarceration? Indigenous people are 50 percent of the prison population in Australia. It's the same thing in New Zealand. Wherever you go, you find out that it's the Indigenous people and people of color who are the ones most likely to be incarcerated. It's also the lowest wage earners who are the ones being victimized and demonized in those societies. So that's a universal thing—it's all over the world. You have the same thing in Lebanon. You have the same thing in Portugal. You've got these youngsters out there being beat up and brutalized, from Surinam and Africa and Angola, particularly. You've got paramilitary forces in those communities, and the people are frustrated about that stuff. Those people know a lot about the history of the Black Panther Party. They know it better than the people in the United States. And they know their colonial history—a lot of these youngsters in the hip hop community. They know it. So there's a possibility. There's a light at

the end of the tunnel. But it's going to be a process. It's going to be a struggle. It won't be an abrupt change, but it's going to be a challenge, particularly in the United States. I mean, the Ku Klux Klan don't exist no more, in sheets and things, but they're now judges, lawyers, the police—that's the Ku Klux Klan today.

Audience: The President.

Emory: Yeah, the President, yeah, absolutely. All that. And you have a police department that's killing people all over the country, every day. Youngsters from the ages of thirteen to nineteen were killed last year in Chicago. Now you say, well, you got Black police, Brown police, yellow police, you've got ethnic police. But what it is, at the core, is the same old culture that exists, that controls and dictates policy. Until you can change the culture, you can't change anything. You've got good police in there, but they ain't got no say. They push them out, threaten them, don't support them. And then the media representation, I mean, people just believe what they hear. And you've got a lot of young people who think that things just started today and from that perspective everything is okay. They don't understand the connections with the struggles that went on historically. You have to put it into the context of how they got to the point where they are today. There's been progress but it's within the system of exploitation. The civil rights struggle was integrated into the system. Rightfully so, because otherwise you was guilty. But at the same time it wasn't about transforming and changing the system but being part of the system. It wasn't about human rights, but about getting into it—being the first this or the first that, or moving up the ladder, but not transforming it.

Emory Douglas, *KILL BILL-NOBEL FRAUD*, 2013.
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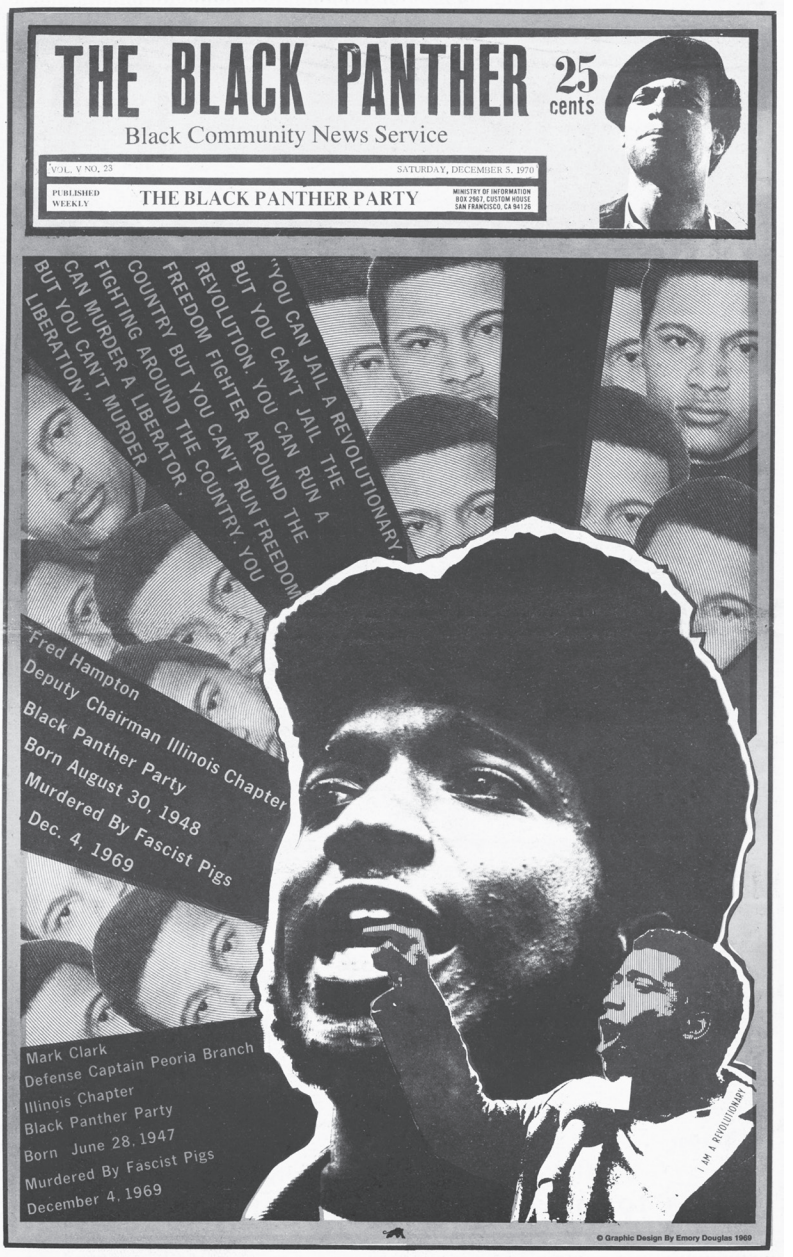
Audience: Can I ask you about the Yenan Conference? I think I heard you say once that you were there, where Mao gave his speech on art and literature.

Emory: When we took the delegation to China, we went to Yenan, where Mao gave his speech on art and literature, and we visited the house where he wrote the speech. And I remember at night we kept hearing all of these explosions, and the whole place where we were was shaking. And the next day we asked them why we kept hearing all of these explosions and they said it was because we were right next to Vietnam. We traveled everywhere for thirty-one days. They took care of our whole trip. We didn't have to pay for anything. How we got there was due to Henry Kissinger and Richard Nixon talking about détente, which would open up China and make it legal for you to go there. So Huey Newton and the Panthers got people we knew to get in touch with people who could get us to go *before* it was legal. We wanted to go in defiance of détente. So Huey Newton went there before there was an easing of relations between the United States and China, in violation of the law. When Huey was there he met Samora Machel. There's a picture of him with Machel, who became the President of Mozambique and who was the leader of the liberation movement of Mozambique. He met with Chou En-Lai. He was supposed to meet with Mao Zedong, but Mao was very ill, and so he met the Vice Premier, who was Chou En-Lai. And from that he set up the delegation. That was when people were trying to stop us from going there, and we got stopped overnight and missed our plane.

We got Panthers to go all around the world. We've got Panthers in Japan. We were invited there by the workers. And Panthers went there and stayed for two or three weeks. We went to Scandinavia, with the antiwar resisters. Bobby Seale stayed for three to six months in Scandinavia. Ex-Vietnam draft resisters were over there selling *The*



Cover of *The Black Panther* newspaper, Saturday, December 5, 1970.
Courtesy of Sean Stewart, Babylon Falling.

Black Panther newspaper and the whole bit. Panthers went to North Korea. We had Panthers in Cuba. And there are Panthers today in Tanzania, who were welcomed there by the government and who are doing beautiful things. They've got the kinds of programs going on that we were doing—Panthers who have adopted poor kids whose families could not care for them. Some of the kids have HIV/AIDS and their families just couldn't deal with the situation. They've got a school. You've got all kinds of people who come through there. They've got water now because Geronimo Ji Jaga Pratt, who had been a Panther, who did twenty-seven years in prison and got a settlement for over two million dollars for being unjustly locked up—he went over there and invested in drilling for a well in front of the United Africa compound. There was no guarantee but sure enough there was water. So those kinds of things show the people what can be done. It's the same thing as our Survival programs, the health clinics, the free food giveaways. It was showing what the government should be doing but wasn't doing. It's the same thing with the Zapatistas.

So that's what we were about—enlightening, educating, all across the country, wherever we had chapters and branches. We gave away free bags of groceries. We gave away brand-new shoes. We said the community deserved the best, so why give secondhand stuff when you can give firsthand stuff whenever you can get it. And people in the community who could relate to that donated—vendors, store owners. But then you had the government trying to stop that and demonizing us. They began to send imposters, dressed like Panthers, into those stores who were donating to us, threatening them and telling them: if you don't give us more we're going to kill you. And there are documents that show this now—freedom of information on COINTELPRO shows all this. There were a lot of things they were trying to do to discredit us, because we were enlightened, even though we were a speck in the dust. But in the context of the overall movement, it was what we were about

and how we were doing it that was impacting the movement—that's what they wanted to stop. Whether people agreed with us or not, they were involved in the same programs, because they saw the necessity of it. You had people who were never Panthers who were beginning to set up alternative childcare, alternative schools, free food giveaways, all these things.

We were leading by example and the people were beginning to implement and do the same thing. When you begin to transform the mindset of the people about politics and what the local government should be doing—when you do that you become an embarrassment. You had Jesse Unruh, who was the Treasurer of the State of California, who came out and said that the Black Panther Party was feeding more hungry children than the United States government. That was true. [laughs] And we had an advisory committee of middle-class Blacks who we talked to in relation to these programs. One person was Ruth Beckford. She was a dancer. She used to dance with Katherine Dunham during the Harlem Renaissance days. And she said: why don't you run the breakfast program out my minister's church? And he agreed—his name was Father Neil. He went on to work with Desmond Tutu for many years after that. And that became our first breakfast program. And we had them in the community, in people's houses. You had Baptist churches. You had Catholic churches. You had people everywhere donating to those programs.

Not only that, but a lot of people think that the Black Panther Party was made up of Marxists. Marxism may have been an ideal and a way we thought, but you had people who came into the Black Panther Party who were Christians, some were Muslims, some were Rastas. Some didn't believe in anything, but they put that aside to work on what we were about. So we transcended all that, in many ways. It wasn't about whether you were Christian or Muslim [laughs]—because most of the Panthers who lived in New York were Muslim, but that wasn't

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Poster for Black Panther event in *The Black Panther* newspaper, Saturday, June 10, 1972.
Courtesy of the Black Panther Party archives (itsabouttimebpp.com).

the thing with us. We also had constructive evaluation, where you had criticism and self-criticism, with regard to how we were developing and did our work, on a day-to-day basis. As we grew and evolved we lived in collectives. Men and women had responsibilities for dealing with the kids and taking care of the chores that had to be done in those houses. You had discussions. You had political education classes in those houses as well as collective political education classes, as well as community political education classes, where people came in from the community to hear and see what we were talking about and doing. We also got the first Black mayor elected to Oakland—Lionel Wilson. We didn't think that he was going to change the world, but we thought he was the best choice. We supported Shirley Chisholm, who was the first Black congresswoman, back in the day. We felt that she was the best choice. And she said, you know: I'm bought and sold. And she was outspoken on the issues. She came to California and we campaigned for her and supported her in the context of who she was during that time. On the issue of raising children in the Black Panther Party, when women started to have babies, we had to figure out how we were going to deal with childcare and so the babies became the responsibility of everyone in the Party. That's how we started our childcare centers. So the Panthers took care of kids. The whole thing of seeing Black men with their kids . . . the first time they began to see that was when they saw the Panthers carrying babies in their arms, changing diapers. We felt it was our responsibility, back in the sixties and the seventies, to do that.

We were young when we started off. The average age of the first group of Panthers was sixteen, seventeen, eighteen, nineteen years old. Huey Newton was twenty-three. I had just turned twenty-two. I think Bobby Seale and Elbert Howard were the oldest: twenty-eight and thirty years of age. The fact that we were young inspired a lot of other young people who came into the Party, from all over the country.

Now, how did we deal with that? We had people call in who wanted to be Panthers, so you had to figure out who these people were, what their commitments were, and you had to communicate that to Central Headquarters. When they came out to Central Headquarters, we had a structure at the time, we had political education classes, and we had to go out and sell papers. And so whatever we were doing then, they had to come out and do the same and see how it was run. Then they would go back and set up a chapter based on what was happening, so there was a unity and a unifying structure to it. Of course, in some areas, some programs may have been more efficient than others. We had them in the South. The first chapter we had in the South was in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. In Winston-Salem, they couldn't get the ambulance to come into the Black community, and so Panthers went and got certified as ambulance drivers and the community bought them an ambulance. And it had a sign: Black Panther Party Community Ambulance Service. And when you take people back and forth to the hospitals you get into discussions with them. You hear what their problems are and you begin to understand what the needs are in the community. When he was running for office one time, Bobby Seale went to visit this woman who had set up a childcare center and he said: we should do that, because if we did that we could enlighten and educate people across the country about how to do that. And so we set up a childcare center and it did take off.

Audience: It's very similar to the Zapatistas in the sense that it's a complete organization. Because it addresses every aspect of life in society, it creates another structure, and that enables it to become more autonomous. That's how it gains its power since it touches on every aspect of social life and organization.

Audience: What I was wondering was, to me, as an outsider, someone who is culturally removed from what the Panthers did, and also a generation removed, but having gone back and read some of the literature and spoken to friends that grew up in different parts of the United States in the late seventies and early eighties. . . . To me what distinguishes the Panthers from other sociopolitical movements of that time is the tangible social programs that you spoke about, but also on a political level, actually marching in on the Congress in Sacramento was a huge thing, especially at that time, and very empowering. What I'm wondering is, fast forward thirty or forty years later, you can still see the influence of the Panthers politically, socially, and in popular culture—you mentioned hip hop music, Mario Van Peebles' movie (*Panther*, 1995), the visual logo is still somewhat prominent. But there doesn't seem to be any active chapters in the way that you see the Nation of Islam is still ongoing. The School of Allah in Harlem is still functional, albeit not with the same vigor that it had twenty or thirty years ago. Even though the individual members or former members of the Party are still active, why would you say there hasn't been a second life to the Party—ten or twenty years later?

Emory: Well, there are two parts to that. One is that the Party was supposed to negate itself. It was never meant to last forever. The Party was meant to be around until people took up the political struggle for liberation themselves. That was the vision of the Panther Party. The other is that you have people who are Panthers now, who are elders at this point, and we have reunions that have grown since 1995. Of course, the US government's Counter-intelligence Program (COINTELPRO) attempted to destroy, discredit, and infiltrate the Panthers with agent provocateurs, to create dissension, distrust, and dislike. But all that has been cleansed, or 99 percent of it, and people come from all over to these reunions, former Panthers who are still

alive. We have the National Alumni Association of the Black Panther Party. We also have the Black Panther Party National Association, where each year a chapter branch is encouraged to put on events to educate and enlighten people about what goes on. And we have former Panthers coming from all over from those chapters and branches. We're celebrating the fifty-year anniversary in 2016. And the people in those communities will come out and support the event. In the Bay Area we have good relations with the public libraries where we put on presentations. Some of the record stores—Rasputin Music up in Haight-Ashbury—they put on a year-round exhibit in their store and from time to time they show historical documents on the Black Panther Party. We continue to celebrate and commemorate fallen comrades and Party members who are incarcerated. That's what a lot of us are dealing with today. You've got over twenty-some Panthers locked down, a lot of them for over forty years, some forty-five and almost fifty years. Fortunately we just got a couple out recently, but that's the challenge. If they negotiate with real terrorists in Afghanistan [laughs] why don't they negotiate sentences to get Black Panther members out? We're freedom fighters.

You now also have the New Black Panther Party, you've got the Black Riders Liberation Party, both of them identifying with but not understanding what the symbolism represents. So they have to go through that whole process of understanding more than just the uniform and the aesthetics of it. It was hard work. I mean it was *hard work*. We sold papers, we had to get up in the morning, you know, you had to go do your chores, your responsibilities, and then come back and then maybe you had some other things you had to do in the evening. You had childcare centers, you would come from one responsibility and you might have to go to a childcare center that evening. You might come back to your collective, where you were staying, and you might have work there to do—clean the house, wash the dishes, do the laun-

dry, do security, work on the magazine, go out into the community—all those things were part of what we were about. So you have many people today who have to learn the process. You have some of these youngsters who are now reading the political history, who are coming and talking to different Panthers to get a broader understanding. It's a process.

After Huey Newton and Bobby Seale started the Black Panther Party, the Panthers could have been wiped off the map, before people even became aware of us. But Panthers were patrolling the community and were committed to what they were doing, without this grand image of personality. Everything grew from that. I heard that some brothers were patrolling the community. I didn't know who it was until they asked me to do a poster for an event—they were planning for Malcolm X's widow to come to the Bay Area, to honor her. And when they came over I knew that's what I wanted to be a part of. And so that's how I connected with them in January 1967. But they could have been wiped off the map, you know. They went to Sacramento because they were trying to change the gun laws, because Huey Newton and Bobby Seale understood the gun laws. The Second Amendment of the Constitution gave you the right to bear arms, as long as it wasn't concealed. So Panthers went into the communities and on patrol with guns. The police would confront them about that and got concerned. They would say: what you doing with them guns? And we would explain that we have the right to carry based on the Second Amendment of the Constitution. Then they got this right-wing congressman, Don Mulford, to pass these gun laws. That's what caused the 'Panther Bill,' and that's why we went to Sacramento as a collective: to observe the legislation that was being passed in relation to this gun law.

When we went there, Governor Ronald Reagan, who later became the President of the United States, was standing on the lawn. He was talking to a room full of paroled school kids and he came over to

where we were because he thought we were a gun club. And he said: what club you all is? And then he turned red and just disappeared! And Bobby Seale read the Executive Mandate No.1 and talked about the concentration camps USA, which we call the prison-industrial complex today. After he read that statement and we started heading to the Capitol, the National Guards were on the stairs of the Capitol and said: you all have broken no law and you can come right on in. Everything was legal. The press was all over us, following us and we were trying to find out where the Chambers were, where the law was being discussed, and the press found out it was upstairs, and the press was leading the way, and the press went into the Chamber where the legislators were talking and the first thing that they said was: get the press out of here. Then the Panthers walked to the front and they said: get them Panthers out of here, get them guns out of here. Then, when we left, we went out on the lawn and stayed there for four or five minutes, and then we went to the filling station a couple of blocks away and two or three minutes later this policeman on his motorcycle came by and said: all you black men . . . [laughs] He called in and got helicopters and got all kinds of police coming down and that's when they made them illegal because they were jacking the rounds into the gun chambers. When you were within city limits and you had rounds in your gun chamber that was a violation of the gun law. And so they arrested us. To make a long story short, we kept going back and forth to the California State Capitol building in Sacramento—we were over in Oakland and San Francisco, that's about a two-hour drive every day—and they eventually said: well, we'll make a deal. They didn't know who had the guns, but they wanted to make a deal, and so they wanted eleven people. So Bobby picked myself along with a few other Panthers and we were going to plead to misdemeanor charges and they were going to give us probation. We said okay because we needed to get back to work that needed to be done on a day-to-day

basis. And so what happened is we pleaded guilty and we knew we were going to get probation, and so we went to court and pleaded guilty to the misdemeanor and the judge said: no, no, you all going to jail. They set us up. So we all went to jail. I was in there for about three weeks. I think Lil' Bobby Hutton, the youngest Panther, was fifteen years old when they mentored him. They had to get permission from his mother for him to be a Panther. He was the very first Panther recruit to the newly formed BPP for Self Defense. So that gives you insight into what we were dealing with.

INTERVIEW WITH MIA EVE ROLLOW, EMORY DOUGLAS, AND SAÚL KAK AT THE LEONARD & BINA ELLEN ART GALLERY, CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY, JUNE 27, 2014.

Mia Eve Rollow: So, we're going to start with the Mexican perspective.

Saúl Kak: I came to the encounter with the Black Panthers and the Zapatistas. There is a very strong relationship between the two movements. There is a relation to resistance in my town. The Zoque culture from which I come has lived through a great deal of displacement, economic poverty, and other problems in the community. All of the demands that the Black Panthers had are very similar to those of the Zoque community and the Zapatistas. When I paint with the Zapantera project in Morelia, with Emory and everyone else, I paint with my heart and with fire, because I am trying to ignite a fire for the fight of the people. I came with an energy for Mother Earth, because Mother Earth calls for us to unite. For us, the earth is the jaguar, the water, the serpent—it's like the column of Mother Earth. On that earth everyone lives. We are humans of many colors, like the plants, like the flowers, like everything that exists around us. Everything that exists, like the Black Panthers, the Zapatista movement, we are many colors of Mother Earth—like the spinal column and the veins. That's what I consider my movement to be.

David Tomas: When did you get in contact with Emory? How was the contact made?

Saúl: There are friends that are part of this encounter, the Zapantera project. There are many artists involved, not just the three of us. Different Indigenous towns, other towns that are coming with their hearts, and I heard from other participants to come paint community murals. I'm a painter. I paint in a place for immigrants in Tabasco. It's

also a place of resistance, of the brothers coming from Central America. I didn't have very much time working with Emory, and I didn't know very much about the Black Panthers, but little by little I'm learning more about the movement and how Emory has gone through the resistance with other activists. I admire his struggle. There have been Zapatistas who have been jailed or brutally killed, and they have given testimonies of how they have suffered. For me art represents resistance. It shows how we are tired, fed up, and how we don't want to keep living like this, that we would like a better world where everyone has dignity and can live with each other like brothers.

David: Emory, did you know much about the Zapatistas beforehand?

Emory Douglas: I had heard about them, yes, but I didn't know anything in detail, until Caleb got in touch with me in 2010 and wanted me to come to make art in residence at EDELO. It was in 2012 that he, Mia, and myself got together to start Zapantera Negra, which is inspired by the aesthetics of both movements. We wanted to do an exhibit on the ways that art can be empowering. When I came to San Cristóbal de las Casas in November 2012, I met different folks who are part of the collective of artists who came and wanted to be part of the Zapantera project. They were planning the exhibit and I brought some of my more recent artworks from my recent retrospectives. They did a fundraiser online and showed some of the embroideries. The embroideries were done by two different collectives of Mayan Zapatista women. It was amazing work that they did, as Saúl has just said, with the Zapatista spirit reflected in the images themselves.

Marc James Léger: Saúl, I'm wondering how would you explain the power of art. Does art have a special ability to communicate?

Embroideries created through the Autonomous Intergalactic Space Program at EDELO and initiated by Rigo 23. The tapestry is made of small embroidered works put together and adorned by a family of weavers in Navenchauc. Courtesy of Rigo 23 and EDELO.

Saúl Kak, Zapantera-style Angela Davis, made during an EDELO residency in 2014. Courtesy of EDELO.

Saúl: Art is the instrument that can change the world. In our culture, in Zoque culture, we are the first people to transcribe what was written in Mesoamerica. This force keeps coming out. The force of my ancestors is the force of fighting. What my ancestors did is what we are doing now. We are doing the same work that they did. For us art represents what breaks and what fights against what attacks us, what kills us. I think that art has a lot of force, a lot of power—it's a weapon. It's like spirit and at the same time it's like intellect that breaks all of the barriers and cuts all of the limits that are placed upon us. Art has many capacities, and we can see it in the works that are done in the communities. In this case, we can see in the Zapantera works the strength of the fusion of the Indigenous people that are resisting in Chiapas and the Black people. The force of the two people can fuse together, and this art has much more strength and we need to see it from the inside, from the community, and from where Emory is coming from. We don't need to look at it from the outside. We need to go inside and we need to introduce ourselves and we need to see the poetry that the people plant—the people who are in resistance. We can see it in the weapon of the corn. Art is very spiritual. You can see it in the colors, in the form of the two people. You can see it here in the painting of Angela Davis—the fusion of the force of the people. Right now the force of the two people is stronger than if it was coming from one place.

David: Emory, in the sixties and seventies your first manifesto had very specific ideas about art as well—about the power of art in fact. What you say is somewhat different from the way that it's being phrased by Saúl.

Emory: Well, the dynamics coming out of the politics of the sixties is reflected in the statements in the manifestos. The first manifesto, as well as those that followed, was more like a position paper on the role of the artist and the art created by the Black Panther Party in support of

the struggle for self-determination. It was also hopefully to be an inspiration to other activists. We're dealing now with a whole world culture, with diversity, and so that's where you see the difference between then and today. People view art from many different perspectives, and we can each of us learn from each other. But the solid foundation that connects the Panthers and the Zapatistas is our self-determination regarding the destiny of our poor oppressed communities. Those things link us together. The variables, the fact that one organization was urban, mostly, and the other is comprised of Indigenous peasants, means that you have two different dynamics. In spirit, what we are doing is similar, in terms of oppression by the state, in terms of trying to develop our own institutions, against Bad Government, as the Zapatistas say, and so you see a whole lot of similarities.

David: You were the Minister of Culture for the Panthers.

Emory: Yes, I became the Minister of Culture. I was a revolutionary artist first. As the Party evolved and as the membership came in, they began to develop the ministries for people who wanted to volunteer, and areas of responsibility were created for people who wanted to work. That's when the different ministries were developed—the Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Information, Ministry of Health. So people who had those skills who wanted to come in, if they were interested in medicine or health, or what have you, they could work in those areas.

David: Did you have people working under you in the Ministry of Culture?

Emory: Yes. Initially, it was just myself, but as the Party evolved we got more people in who had skills and who came from different chapters and branches. My responsibility was to teach them the politics and to show them how it was to be reflected in their art, as opposed to

encouraging them to be creative. Most of them were more creative than I was, much greater artists than I was, but it was my responsibility to show them how to integrate the politics into their art.

David: How did you do it?

Emory: Well, the idea of "Each One Teach One" is very basic. You don't do it in an academic way, you do it through the thing itself, through observation and participation, and that was one of the reasons why art became a very powerful point of perspective for the African American community and others who weren't a reading community. They could learn through observation and participation; they see images and they get the gist of what the story is. People could see in the artwork what we were talking about. The art was a reflection of Black Panther Party politics. The art was a reflection of them as well, and so that put them on the stage as heroes and they began to want to read and see what was going on—more so, because they had seen their uncles or because they would think 'them images look like father' or 'auntie.' The art also presented caricatures of the pigs but they were reflections as well, because they was as humongous as it is today—oppression, police-state abuse all across the country, as you have today in the United States—and they could see that symbol as a symbol of oppression.

The art of the Panthers transcended the African American community and took on a life of its own. Eventually you had branches and chapters across the country, and outside of the country, in New Zealand. You had the creation of the New Zealand Panthers in 1971, an official chapter of the Black Panther Party. You had the London Panthers. You had the Australian Panthers, who came on the scene around the same time as the New Zealand Panthers. Then you had those who were inspired by the Panthers. You had the Dalit Panthers in India. You had Panthers inside of Israel at that time as well, and

elsewhere in the Middle East. So, you know, this was a humongous, broad movement, and some of the activists were more inspired by the Panthers than they were, directly, a formation or chapter under the Black Panther Party. All of that played into how the art became popularized all over the world. You had governments, socialist governments, unions on a local level, and teachers coming and taking papers to their students and you could see images on the front and back and sometimes inside of the paper. So you have a different kind of art gallery. You have a people's gallery with some people sitting there looking at it, and then you plaster it on the walls in the community where people went to work and stuff. So it's informal. It's outside of the institutional type of thing, which people couldn't afford to go to or concern themselves with at that time, because they were trying to find a job or trying to, you know, manage their day-to-day survival. When you have the art out there where they're surviving then they see these images and that takes on a life. All across the country we've got Panthers selling papers, posters, and all that played a dynamic role in the art itself. That had an impact in many ways.

David: But you were the one doing artwork for the magazine. Were other people doing artwork too?

Emory: Yes, there were many artists who came along who had the opportunity to do some work. There was still a large volume, say, another 85 percent of the work to do and these other artists worked with me, initially. I was supposed to go to Cuba in 1967 but I couldn't go because there was nobody to work on the newspaper. Bobby Seale said you can't go because we don't have anybody to work on the newspaper. . . . So as we evolved and got people into the cadres then I would explain to them in a very basic way, you know, you place this here, you place that there, and they would see some things that I was doing, and

they began to grasp how to integrate simple things into the artwork, to give it more substance and meaning in relation to change and transformation, you know, as opposed to making a beautiful piece of art.

David: So the art was really integrated into the Party program?

Emory: Yes, it was a reflection of Party politics, a reflection of the aspirations and the concerns of the community. As a Panther you listen and you try to feel those concerns, and then you try to express and interpret the needs of the community in terms of resistance, because there was a feeling of frustration but there is always a feeling of self-determination and resistance. So the art came out of that situation.

David: This goes back to what you were saying about the Zapatistas—how the art is integrated into the culture?

Emory: Yes.

Marc: Mia, could you say something about EDELO, which I think is mostly you and Caleb? You created an amazing collaboration. Could you say something about how your group started and what your thoughts are on the power of art, the power of collaboration that you created.

Mia: EDELO was a space that Caleb Duarte and I opened in 2009. Caleb is a creative partner of mine in this dream of reality. After our collaborations in graduate school, at the sculpture department of the Art Institute of Chicago, he invited me to Chiapas to open an art space.

It's somewhat difficult for me to speak about EDELO as I suppose I'm more in the world of the wordless. Words are potent but the wordless is sometimes a wider vision, as it is not defined. I always saw EDELO as a wordless place, one that didn't have a statement, one that stayed a mystery, so that the public became confused, obstructed

with questions, with impossibilities that spur possibilities. At one point Emory and Rigo told us that people had warned them against us—that we were with the CIA because we work with certain people. There's something about not knowing what you're putting together but trusting your intuition and have it lead you into things that seem explosive—but while you're doing that always listening and attentive to what it is to be alive, even if this brings fear of chaos and conflict. It was good for people to be pushed out of their comfort zones.

EDELO was inclusive—everyone created at EDELO: artists of all types, *coletos* (the original San Cristóbal settlers), healers, religious folks, sex workers, anarchists, working people, academics and students, homeless people, jugglers, campesinos, people in crisis, astronauts, youth, the elderly, and the list goes on. It was a place where all these people were provoked to find their power in the space of the non-functional, non-visible, and non-personal. We wanted to unite people, to un-divide. We believed that a space for the creative process and collaboration was transformative and a necessary activity for healing in this world of the 'other.'

We wished to provide a space for the local community, particularly as we were taking over the space of the United Nations, who walked away from the important issues the people were facing. We wanted as artists to walk towards these issues. At times our main sculpture was our body and spirit you could say. Art became no different than health and freedom of the mind.

EDELO was a living structure. Our soul was found within the poetics of the Zapatistas and the autonomous communities that we learned from and hoped to touch through art. Through our residency program, we created a dynamic intercultural web of artists, which was empowering and mind-enhancing to all involved. We opened our doors to street kids, differently-abled people, displaced communities, newly forming autonomous communities, and Zapatistas. They became the spirit of

Mia Eve Rollow, Video still from *Body*, 2007. Death Valley, California.
Courtesy of Mia Eve Rollow.

the place and the collective acts of creation elevated our experience of what is possible for our bright dream of the earth. What the Zapatistas offer is a wider look at life than what politics normally provides. Beyond left and right, they begin their creation with an open mind. They begin with the flower of the word from a people who dream in the day and see in the night. They build from there. We wanted to be a part of the visionaries who see through the eyes of the earth and imagine what we as humans can offer to this beauty.

David: Art comes in different forms, obviously, but the revolutionary art we've seen is very body-based and representational. But then there is also revolutionary abstraction, which doesn't have the same function. In any case, Mia, you did some performances, *Body* and *Tide*. I was interested in the politics of the body, which is obviously related to your injury. Our relationship to the world is always through the body—that's how we're plugged into the world. Those two performances were very interesting from this point of view.

Mia: Those pieces come from a time in my life where I created myself as a myth and a being without an identity. A myth is a powerful construct because it controls the perception of reality. I sculpted myself as a living myth, using my body as if it was a doll in a dream. Having experienced what seemed like an endless amount of time transcending my body, which comes with suffering and fasting, I exited the surrounding myths around me and then played with these illusions when I came back to the social world. And so at this time I created many myths and short videos from sculpted body actions. *Body* and *Tide* were reactions to a personal transformation that ultimately connects to the universal.

Body is a work that speaks on many levels but it is basically about interdependence and the experience of losing control of one's body and one's means of caring for oneself. In this piece I was passed from one person to another—Caleb and his brother—up a mountain. What is in play is a progressive shift from notions of independence to that of interdependence. In this piece the performers create a sort of autonomous system, an organism where the bodies become united. In order to get up a hill, we progressively formed a distinct, organic pattern of movements. Through this kind of interdependence, it's possible to eliminate the disabilities we create for ourselves.

More specifically, what you see is a woman in a vulnerable position, unable to control her half-covered body. She is forcefully passed from man to man. However, the piece brings an aspect of human contact to the next level. Beyond the normalized objectification of women, we see a vulnerable being who is uniting with her companions in order to go up a hill. This dramatic shift of perspective confronts us with our humanity, and for women with the patriarchal view that woman is an object rather than a living being.

David: It's related to the social body and injustice—it's like a metaphor for the relationships that are possible between people and for strategies of political action. And the other piece?

Mia: *Tide* was also created in Death Valley, California. On the right of the dual-screen video, you see Caleb and his brother, unsuccessfully attempting to elevate a structure in the air with a thirty-foot pole. It's man's attempt to balance, but he's not working with the wind and so it's all struggle, like an erect monument that keeps falling.

This image is contrasted to that of a woman with her legs tied around her neck, carrying her body across the desert. This alludes to mobile vernacular architecture and to the body as a sanctuary. Like a snail she moves close to the ground, connected to the earth. She looks like a mythological creature that carries its own weight like a sack of wood up a path, depicting the self-determination and ability of those who are close to the earth to adapt and exist under harsh conditions and to rise above the physical. You see the power behind small efforts that constantly move forward. She is moving through the different irrigation paths that water had gone through at one time in the desert. It speaks to immigration patterns also—patterns delineated through nature that humans go through.

Marc: When we talked a few days ago, Mia, you mentioned something about the fact that the Zapatistas don't see things in terms of revolutionary struggle and class consciousness, which is obviously something that Emory has dealt with as a member of the Panthers. Does that idea of subordinating art to politics still make sense in today's social movement discourse, and what did you get from working with the Zapatistas on that question?

Emory: Well, revolutionary struggle does have a place today. For example, I was invited to TRImarchi in Argentina, a festival that is organized with young artists. This group of about ten graphic artists got together some ten years ago, and because they didn't have any quality graphic designers they got together and started bringing people in from around the world, to enlighten them, and inform them, and teach them. And so they invited me to the festival that they have each year, where they have from three to seven thousand people, mostly young people, come from the surrounding countries, Honduras, Brazil—they come from everywhere. I gave a presentation and I thought that they would like it, but after it was over, after the seven curtain calls, I kept trying to figure out what it was that they liked about it and what I concluded was, in talking to these young people afterwards, that they could see in the artwork the issues they were dealing with there. So the art transcended what it was in relation to what I created in the sense of being subordinated to politics and reflecting a particular situation. It was interpreted by them as something that dealt with oppression and self-determination regardless of whether you look at it from the standpoint of subordinating art to politics or what have you. It became inspiring to those who saw it and wanted to do something similar in their artwork. So I think that in that context the artwork goes beyond what I was doing. In the context of the Black Panther Party it means certain things, but to others it takes on other meanings. But from the context of resistance and self-determination, they knew it was from the Black Panther Party.

Marc: So there is a kind of utopian dimension to the artwork—a dimension that's capable of transcending the specific, concrete situations, transporting elements to a different time and place and into different communities.

Some of the anarchist directions in new social movements want to get away from the hardcore ideology that we might get from Fanon and

Mao, from Marxism-Leninism, what have you, and I think that relates to what Mia was telling me about how the Zapatistas see things. What do you think of that issue, since some people say we need the opposite, that we need to bring back a stronger ideology and organizational capacity. We have a weak ideology, but we don't know if it's capable of creating a united front. Of course that would be difficult. If it was created you would have problems. In terms of strategy and tactics, how do you feel about the import of revolutionary ideology today or in your encounters with Zapatista artists?

Emory: Well, in terms of strategy and tactics, art remains the same. You've got to be aware of what's going on in order to even be able to create art that is reflective of politics. This is the message you're trying to get across. You have to have a basic understanding of class warfare, of teachers being attacked and that sort of thing, in order to interpret those realities in an artwork that may be inspiring to someone. I would think that if anybody was to say today that we have the absolute answer in terms of ideology then that would be dishonest. Politics is ongoing and always evolving. Even in the context of the Panthers, we always developed our own interpretation of Marx and Lenin, of scientific socialism or intercommunalism, as we used to call it, because all the communities were interdependent and interconnected with each other. Marx and them came out of another age, you know, and so we had to apply this learning to the situation and the conditions that we lived in. Even if we talked about revolutionary strategy in that context, the Panthers would never understand it. And so it had to be broken down by Huey and specifically by Bobby Seale, who would break it down so that even a child could understand it. And that was the main idea with the artwork. The great revolutionary thinker from Guinea-Bissau, Amílcar Cabral, made the statement that you have to be able to speak so that even a child can understand it and in order to reach the

broadest audience. And so I began to contemplate that approach more and more in the context of the artwork.

But in the context of art in relation to the Zapatistas . . . they live in their own world. People who go there may be Marxist, may be into religion, or are atheist. They're intrigued by what the Zapatistas do, which is an inspiration to others, in relation to whatever their ideological or philosophical perspectives might be. It's a very powerful connection. Of course the Zapatistas live in their own world, developing their own society, being open to people coming in, exploring them and seeing them, and continuing to move on in relation to what their belief system is. There's a saying: "Nothing is impossible for those who can see the invisible." It's the unmanifested transformed into the manifested, and that's what goes on in their development. Everything is not always tangible. Something can be invisible until you make it into something that has shape and form. So that's what they do. No matter what the system is, if you're trying to discuss it and put it forward, you have to be able to put it into practice, to make it manifest itself. It's the same thing with art. You have to put it there where you can feel it or even feel like you feel it, or feel that people can take it. [laughs]

Marc: Could you say something about your experience in *La Escuelita*, the Zapatistas' "little schools" in Chiapas, or maybe Saúl could say something about it?

Saúl: This is a time right now with the *escuelita* for sharing the knowledge that the Zapatistas have. Sometimes the people from outside judge what is happening and they can't really see the organization of the Indigenous people. So they judge without knowing the reality. The school is for the whole world to know profoundly the reality of what is lived by the Zapatista people, the direct contact with the revolutionary people as well as the direct contact with the earth. You carry the

wood and you work with the machetes. The escuelitas let you encounter yourself within the earth. There are twenty years of fighting as well as achieving, but there are more than five hundred years of exploitation and putting rules on the way that people live so it's fractured the community and made them live differently than they would live. So when someone judges from outside the Zapatismo movement and says they haven't achieved anything, they're wrong. In the process of fighting it takes the time of the people to love the earth, to give the earth life, and they're the ones who are going to take the time to do it. We are in this fight and this resistance because we love the earth. We respect the earth and so little by little we continue in this resistance. We're going to resist people who come from the outside who are killing us. We're going to live with all the different perspectives and in this case through art, with the music, with the painting, with all the forms of art that there are.

Emory: Well, in my relation with the escuelitas, I was sent a letter, requesting that I be one of the 1,500 or 1,700 people involved in that particular session of the little schools, and they accepted me as one of those who would go and live with a Zapatista family for one week. In December, 2013 I went to what they call the "school of the dirt," and there you register and get sent to the location where you are going to stay, in my case to Morelia. At Morelia I was invited to stay at the Comandante Ramona location—who was one of the leaders of the Zapatistas, one of those who, when they had the insurgency in 1994, took over San Cristóbal de las Casas. She died of cancer a while back, and I was sent to the location where she stayed. Other people were sent to other locations. Some places where you go you stay with Zapatista families and collectives. In other cases you stay with Zapatista families who are not in collectives. Some people went for a few or several hours into the jungles, depending on where you were staying. I think that we went for about a four- or five-hour ride, and they took me up to

Zapantera Negra. Emory Douglas visiting an autonomous community in Elambo Bajo, 2012. Courtesy of EDELO.

the host family. Some people went for a few or several hours into the jungles, depending on where you were staying. I think that we went for about a four- or five-hour ride, and they took me to the host family. We didn't stay in the collective area because the family I was staying with had to work days and had chores and by the time they would be finished, we would be too late to go to the collective, spend time with them and still get back that night early enough to be able to get up early the next morning. And so we stayed in these wooden houses with the dirt floors—the same types of houses that the sharecroppers had in the United States.

And you have to go out in the field to the outhouses, to the cold showers on the outside. And this is in the jungle. I had a young host that they sent with me from Morelia to go with me. He was a thirteen-

Zapantera Negra. An encounter between the Black Panther Party and the Zapatistas, 2012. Courtesy of EDELO.

year-old Zapatista. And he said, "Well, I don't speak English," and I said, "Well, I don't speak Spanish," and they said, "Don't worry, you want to go, you gotta work it out." So we got together. We communicated. When he said "*baño*," and he pointed down there, I knew that was the bathroom. So I learned the word *baño*! And you could see not far from that there was a structure where they were teaching and he had books and he had to take notes on what was going on. I saw that every evening. I stayed in the back of the store and the family, the son and his wife, stayed in the front. We had cots to sleep on made of wood planks, with one blanket. There was a tin roof and the whole bit. He wanted me to teach him to count, so I taught him and he would repeat in Spanish from ten to twenty. He wanted to look at everything on my computer. He would check out everything on my desktop at night, and he would download everything he could. He was sharp, because it's

pitch black at night—ain't no lights, no electricity—and you have got to go down there at night to go to the bathroom, and there are no lights unless you have a flashlight. The toilet had a little thing on it for you to put the water in so that you can flush it and so you have to go get a bucket of water and you would come back and pour it in the thing. So he said: "When you go I'll go with you," so that he could provide security. Since I couldn't go down the hill by myself, I had to let him know when I wanted to go.

It was work. We got up at six o'clock every morning. We went up the hill, about a quarter mile to the shack, or the building where they fix the food, with a dirt floor, same thing, a two-by-four building and the whole bit. In the morning we ate tortillas and beans and had some juice or water. The first morning they told us we were going to plant corn, and so I assumed we were just going to go down to a field and go through a simple trail. It rains out there at night and then the sun comes up during the day and you go down a hill and it's kind of muddy. When you get down to that field you get to the place where they start chopping away then you go down this trail that has red mud and rocks and you've got all this bushy stuff on the side, some of it overlapping, and you've got to chop it back as you go through certain areas. You start walking in the mud and your foot sticks down into it almost up to your ankles and you try to pull your foot out and your boot is about ready to come off. And you're used to city walking and the next thing you know you're flipping over into the mud. It was rough, but I stuck with it all the way through! One time I had to use this ledge where you can almost fall off, and I fell about five times that first day. The last time I fell they got worried, so they chopped up two sticks for me so that I was walking with two sticks. And you had to go through a pass where they have barbed wire, and they lift the wire so that you can pass underneath. Then we got to this particular location where we were going to plant the corn and where the slope was steep.

You had to take four or five seeds and plant them in a hole and put the dirt back over it. We drank fermented corn water out of a gourd, which they poured for each of us. Then we went back that afternoon.

The next day we went in the opposite direction and picked coffee beans. It was amazing because, to them, walking on those roads is like a ballet. This was mud and stuff and so as we were going in, this guy was coming out and he had a baby in his hands and he's walking on the trail like it just wasn't nothing. And I'm tripping and falling and the whole bit. [laughs] It was amazing to see how, as he was coming out and we were coming in, a little while later, he had little girls—I guess they were his daughters—and they were running and jumping from rock to rock, coming in and coming out, to catch up with him. And so in this spot they had creeks, and you had to go down to get from here to here without falling in the water. And they were just jumping off and I was trying to figure out how I'm going to get down off of this and get over to the other side. So I just slid down into it. [laughs] Then I had to figure out how I was going to get up the other side without falling down or slipping down. So there were two creeks to go over. The first one took about twenty-five minutes to get to. The other one took about forty-five minutes to an hour to get to. And so we picked the coffee beans. I could hear folks on the other side but we never did see them.

On the final day we went in the same direction as the second day, but we went right into the first part of the trail and off the trail a little bit to plant bananas. It was an amazing experience. Every day you get up, work, come back in the evening, and you stay at the location. We had a shower outside, on the side of a hill. We had a curtain connecting the mud wall to a stick. They have a water faucet connected to a well with a hose that looks like it comes from a car. So that's where you take your cold shower and you get used to that after a while. Even in the shower you're standing in the red mud they have everywhere.

They thought I was younger than what I was. I'm seventy-one years old. On the last day they asked me my age, and they were surprised to know how old I was. They couldn't figure out why I couldn't make it all the way up the trail. After I told them my age they understood. I'm a vegetarian and one day they had chicken on and I couldn't explain that to them and they couldn't understand and so they made chicken noises and I would say no. [laughs] So we were able to communicate.

INTERVIEW WITH EMORY DOUGLAS, MIA EVE ROLLOW AND SAÚL KAK AT THE LEONARD & BINA ELLEN ART GALLERY, CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY, JUNE 28, 2014.

David Tomas: I had a question about the word 'spirituality,' because of the way it was used in our previous discussion. As we know this word is complex and ambiguous because of its relationship to invisible forces. I was wondering how each of you define spirituality.

Emory Douglas: Well, my definition of spirituality is a higher power. There isn't necessarily a name for it but there is a force, an invisible force that we are guided by. It's the invisible aspect of things. It's the unknown factors that become known. When they're unknown, they're part of this invisible force: the higher power that transcends all of us.

Saúl Kak: For us the spirit comes from the outside. We call this spirit "*kohama*." It is a being that lives inside of us and that is like the day—the creator of the day. It's two things. It's like the protector inside of us and the protector of the day. It's what we literally call spirit. It communicates with everything, with the earth and with everything that is in the earth. I could explain it as if it was a part of the body of a human being and where we live. So the body is made of veins and bones and arteries and everything that the body is made of. We are like one of these parts. We are one part of that grand thing and that is what we call spirit.

Mia Eve Rollow: Spirit is nothing I can put into words. It's nothing I can hold just because it's my hand; it's nothing I can look in the eye because it is my eye. It's like the riddles that delineate things, the circle within the circle: I have no beginning and no end.

David: It's not the same as God?

Copy of Zapatista mural by EDELO, from Zapantera Negra at the Leonard & Bina Ellen Art Gallery, Concordia University, June 2014. Photo by Marc James Léger.

Emory: I think it's the Hindu who say: "water can't wet it, fire can't burn, scissors can't cut it." It's the invisible aspect of our being. It's like "we all sit in a circle and suppose, but the secret sits in the middle and knows." So we always learn the lessons, but we never know the whole of the lesson. It's an ongoing process. So as human beings there may be scientific and there may be other ways of going from one process to another, but it's the invisible aspect that is pushing us to higher levels of consciousness and awareness, like we thought everything was flat before and find out it's round, and all those kinds of realities.

Marc James Léger: I have a question for Saúl. It's about something written by Raúl Zibechi. It says that for the Zapatistas, in their view of the world, the idea of unity eliminates differences. It says: "The logic of the escuelita is opposed to that political culture of the electoral Left. It's not about going to listen to the Indian commanders . . . but rather to share daily life with the common people. It's not about the discursive and rational transmission of a codified wisdom." [everyone laughs]

Okay, let's say it's not rationalized. How does art fit into everyday life if you have something like the Councils of Good Government and if you have iconic images, like the red star? What would be the connection between community government and art production?

Saúl: What's the part about rationalizing?

Marc: That somehow the logic of the escuelitas is not about political directives, according to Zibechi, and that it's not about a specific code or rationality, but everyday communal living. How does the everyday life aspect of culture translate through the Good Government Councils? How do those groups shape art? How do you go from everyday life into a highly political articulation mediated by culture, like with the EZLN

symbolism for example? There is an Indigenous imagery combined with a political Zapatista imagery.

Saúl: There is a symbol, the red star. But you have to remember that for much time the government that controlled the Indigenous towns didn't want to see the people. There came a time when the town was tired of this and this is where the Zapatistas come in. They use their bodies, which they say in English is 'performance,' which is to make a symbol of resistance. If for five hundred years no one wanted to see them, now they put this on and they cannot be seen. So this is a form of manifestation, which can be seen to be political art. It's an action that says we are against the system. One government does not exist, one that controls and manipulates. The authorities of the town are the town itself. It's what we call the Good Government. You need to look at how in the towns, in the pre-Hispanic times, there was communal living. So what the towns did is put into practice once again the way that they used to live, a communal form of living. Art is natural. It's part of daily life. It's like communion with the earth. It's direct. I don't know if I answered your question very well.

Marc: I was thinking about this question in particular because of the symbol of the red square that was used by the Québec students and Strike Debt in the US.

Saúl: The Zapatistas have a symbol that is red and black. In the middle is a red star. The text is the name of the organization—the EZLN. The symbols that are made from the towns are not icons or symbols but simply a natural part of the way the people exist with the earth.

David: Where did the red star come from? Is it a Maoist symbol?

Saúl: The red represents the force of the town and the resistance. The colors of the town symbolize in a natural way, like the colors of the sky. If you like to see it coming from Mao then you can see it that way, but you need to put yourself in the context of where you encounter the star. In this case it's from the people. The original people from the town have another way of looking at the star. It's like a spiritual force from above, from the base of the house to the height of the moon. It all together forms the house. There are elements that exist that the people live with and take.

Now, I'm going to tell the story of why the star is very important for my people. When one changes from life to death, or from death to life, there are eleven stars, those that shine, those that give light to our path, which we call "mactumatza." This is the light that illuminates the pathway. As well, this is what protects us in this new walk, in the transition to a new life.

David: One of the things that struck me is how young the Panthers were. Emory can you talk about the Panthers from this perspective?

Emory: I think they were inspired. A lot of them came out of the universities. They came out from the high schools. They used to be in gangs. Little Bobby Hutton, who was one of the very first, knew a lot of the others well, and they knew each other. Huey Newton and Bobby Seale mentored Little Bobby before they even started the Black Panther Party. So when they started, they had permission from his parents. They didn't come in because they were intellectuals or anything like that but because we were confronted with abuse on a daily basis in the community, by the police abuse and the racism that exists. Those things drove a lot of people into wanting to change the system. At the same time there was the high level of frustration among the young people that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. talked about. That's where you

see a lot of the young people come in who respected Dr. King's nonviolence but didn't want to turn the other cheek anymore. They wanted to stand up in self-defense and resistance. Huey Newton and young people all across the country were frustrated. It was the right timing of the situation, when the Black Panther Party started, that drew people all across the country to be a part of the movement.

Marc: Amiri Baraka has a quote that says: "We were Malcolm's children and we wanted Malcolm art."

Emory: We were inspired by Malcolm, yes, in many ways, but there are a lot of people who don't know that for Huey, one of the first readings for the Black Panther Party was Mao's Little Red Book. College teachers liked it at UC Berkeley, and we used to resell the books we had bought to make money to buy the guns and other stuff for the patrols. Then there was Robert F. Williams, who was a Black man from Monroe, North Carolina, who was the head of the NAACP at one time, and had also helped to integrate the swimming pools there and other things. He was banned from the NAACP because he believed in people defending themselves with guns, and he and his wife had to leave North Carolina because of the fact that they were going to lynch him because of the things he was doing. He even took the model of the NRA and started one for Blacks, down there, so that they could learn how to defend themselves. He wasn't in it for the same reasons that the NRA was in it, but using that whole framework so that Blacks could learn how to shoot and protect themselves against the Klan, or what have you. He was run out of North Carolina. He went to Cuba. As a matter of fact, Amiri Baraka—LeRoi Jones—traveled with him to Cuba, along with others, when he first left. Then he went to Tanzania and then he was in China, and we used to see him, in China, sitting with Mao Zedong. Chairman Mao!

And so that was how many of us began to identify with the Chinese Revolution: because they were showing solidarity with African Americans at that time. Williams used to have a publication called *Free Dixie*, and he also had a radio station called Free Dixie, and he had a newspaper called *The Crusader*. Well, he was talking about revolution in that context. He came back I think in 1969 to Detroit, Michigan, which was very progressive then, in the context of those people who were in politics, particularly African Americans and activists. They refused to extradite him back to Monroe, North Carolina. And so he stayed there for many years until lawyers got the charges against him dismissed.

So that's when he went back, but during that time all of this was part of the youth movement. This was college students and high school students who . . . you're talking about the Black Power movement, and Black Consciousness movement, where you begin to define yourself as who you are, as opposed to those who had defined you in a colonial way. And so you began to sign yourself and your name, call yourself African American, or Black American, as opposed to Negroes—the name given to you as a colonial subject. And so that's the name you were given but when you began to resist that on the college campuses then you called everything "a child of God," or, you were demonized, you were called a "communist" or a "red." All of these things went on during that time of change. And these young people, again, changing the names of the student unions from Negro Students Association to Black Students Association, received a lot of resistance from the administrators on the campuses all across the country. Because the level of consciousness that was being raised against the forces that were exploiting and brutalizing the community and murdering Black folks all across the country . . . there was always readiness. People wanted to do something. And it just happened that the Black Panther Party, because of certain events that took place, like going to Sacramento—

that went all across the country and the world, through the electronic media—brought a lot of attention and a lot of young people called in saying they wanted to start Party chapters all across the country. Then there was the second event when Huey Newton got shot and a policeman got killed in Oakland. It was after that you had people calling in that wanted to join the Black Panther Party. So, as things evolved, other than young people, you had more elders come into the Party. But it was still a youth movement. When you hear Huey Newton or Bobby Seale talking, you can see they were great communicators—very insightful beyond their years, particularly Huey.

Marc: At the 2012 Creative Time Summit in New York, at which Mia gave a presentation, in fact, Tom Finkelpearl, the director of the Queens Museum in Brooklyn and now the Cultural Affairs Commissioner for New York City, said that young activists and engaged artists today should be thinking more in terms of Dr. King and less in terms of Malcolm X—that people should be thinking in terms of reform rather than revolution. He seemed to be saying that we need more constructive approaches that work within the existing institutional frameworks, and so on. What would you say to that?

Emory: Well, that's the mindset of some folks. You have to do it all, but if you have an organization and a structure then you understand how you want to move and what you're about. You're about transformation and changing society. You're trying to do away with the old way of doing things, and trying to create something new. But then if you individually see things in such a way that you can't change certain things, that there are certain things that have an invisible aspect to it, that we don't know what goes on, and if you know that, you know that this whole thing is corrupt and that it ain't gonna work, you know. [laughs] But still, you have to go through that process sometimes, to get to that

point where you can see that this isn't working. And so what do you do? What do you have to do next?

I think that perhaps maybe this is where his thinking was. But maybe what he doesn't realize is that Malcolm X and Dr. King came together. They had a meeting and you've seen photographs of that. They talked about how there was no difference between the two, just the way that they went about it. And they were going to be doing some other things. Dr. King also came to the point where he realized that things weren't going to change in that context. So he called a meeting just before he got killed. He called on the Panthers and other more radical groups to come together. And he was going to have this big meeting, but he got killed before that. Bobby was one of the Panthers he had talked to, and it was in the air. It was about ready to happen. Coming North he saw that the North was just as or more racist than the South. And his frustration with the war, when he changed his position on the war in Vietnam and became antiwar, and began to talk about the economic system and things like that, he was outside of the comfort zone of what was acceptable to the status quo.

When you look at it in that context, what this gentleman is saying, in relation to transforming the system, might be something that is complementary to what the status quo was at that time. But when you're provocative and you stand outside of that, then you become an enemy in many ways. [laughs] We did some things that worked within the context of the system, but it was to enlighten and educate people about the system, so that they could see for themselves what the limitations were. And the system itself will enlighten and educate you because you see it as we see it now. More and more people are frustrated. People are led to believe one thing and they're lied to. [laughs] You can go from the educational system on up. There ain't never been enough jobs for us—for graduates. There never has been. People are saying that now. You've got people who have Masters and PhDs and whatever they have;

they're working for one or two years at McDonald's and trying to survive. Then on top of that they've got debt to pay, $100,000 or more. So all of those things are educating people, enlightening people that this ain't working. So, I mean, you get the illusion of transformation. You may get some things from the pacification programs that they have to give you the illusion, but they only do that to a certain degree. I mean you get certain people into the middle class that think they're doing good. They may even be progressive. Now they got in there and they have their little job. They have a house. They have a car. They may even have a mortgage. Now they have to focus on that. They can't focus on the 'we.' It's the 'me' who is trying to survive. You see what I'm saying? [laughs] They have these little trinkets that are getting dished out. And they see this when they have a mortgage that they were lied to about and they've lost their home and the whole bit and they don't have a car anymore and they collapse. And so it's a whole dynamics there that, you know, that simply educates you and enlightens you. But there have to be people there at the same time who are showing you and enlightening people as much as possible.

Marc: There has to be organization in addition to awareness. Some organizations have to be created so that the frustration has a positive way of being channeled and so that people can actually make those changes. You have to build a power base.

Emory: That's a process too. I mean, it took just two people, Huey Newton and Bobby Seale, who had this idea, based on what they wanted to do. They began to implement it and began to do it. But the politics came out of the frustrations that were expressed at other meetings, debates, and discussions that they were involved in with activists at that time. From the divisions that they experienced I guess it just

wasn't working for what they wanted to do and so they came together and developed the whole organization.

David: I was wondering about your early influences. Because things you grow up with, like culture and environment, can be very important later in terms of both art and politics.

Emory: Just like any other kid I was always making artwork, drawing on paper, doing watercolors, nothing that has any stuff to it, just abstract art that had no real meaning to it in terms of framing it for some kind of resistance or enlightening people about something. The beauty may have been in the artwork itself. I was in and out of the juvenile system as a youngster and I always tell people that it was for illegitimate activities: it wasn't sanctioned by the government. [laughs] When I was eighteen I was going to City College, and the people at the Juvenile Hall knew me because my mother was legally blind and she ran a concession stand that they had at that time for people who were handicapped. Her concession stand was where probation officers and people who were coming to see their kids who were locked up could buy donuts, cookies or candies, and stuff like that. I was locked up there off and on as a youngster, for being bad. [laughs] So when I was getting ready to go to college the counselor suggested that I take up art, because that's what I was doing when I was locked up. Then when I went to City College they suggested that I take up commercial art, which I did. That gave me access to learning lettering, to learning design, understanding the printing process, and all that comes under fashion design—all of it. Eventually I got to the point where I was good enough that they would send me on jobs. So I ended up working for a place that made fine wine goblets, doing display signs for their store, and advertising for the newspaper. I also worked at a silkscreen factory. I used to do technical illustrations for doctors who wanted material for different departments at the school, chromosomes and all kinds of stuff.

So I was developing my skills. City College at that time was a junior college. All you had to do was pay to get in—whatever that was, fifty or one hundred dollars. The art department was one of the best where they teach you to critique your work. I guess that would be down on a professional level. You also had to be able to break down a design element in the publication and explain in front of the class how the whole publication was put together—how your artwork was put together and the whole bit. So you had to really understand the stuff, which helped me when I went into the Black Panthers. But that's a sidebar.

Now, as a child, I was not aware of a lot of Black artists, except for those that I got involved with in the Black Arts Movement that was going on at that time. But my auntie, who I used to stay with often, used to have a calendar, which she used to get every year. And the calendars showed images by a well-known Black social realist artist named Charles White. They were from this insurance company, I can't remember the name of it, but all the Black folks used to buy their insurance from it, over many, many years. Charles White was married to Elizabeth Catlett at one time, in the early days. Then she married a Mexican artist. They lived in Mexico for many years. Elizabeth Catlett was a well-known feminist Black artist who passed at 93 years of age. But she was well-known and very famous—Charles White as well. You can look up his work. And so that was the inspiration for me, whether consciously or unconsciously, because I didn't see a lot of Black art at that time, except when I went to my auntie's house.

My inspiration, you could say, also comes from when I was painting in the Black Arts Movement. I began to learn about Black history and spending time around Black artists. I did props for Amiri Baraka's plays then, several props for when he came out to the Bay Area. When I was asked if I could do them, I said yes. They were simple backdrops for theatrical plays, community art. You had Sonia Sanchez, a well-known poet, who came to San Francisco State to teach. I did a cover for her first

poetry book called *Home Coming*. Then I was involved in doing artwork in the Black Arts Movement. I did a caricature of Amiri Baraka. I made an image of Stokely Carmichael, Rap Brown—people who were in the movement. Other artists were also doing some artwork and stuff that I began to see and became inspired by during that time—like Samella Lewis and a few others.

Marc: You were extremely busy, for a young man. It seems like a short period, from City College to working in the Black Arts Movement with people like Baraka and soon into the Panthers?

Emory: Yes, all that is in the context of City College, in a three-to-four year expanse. If you went to City College you could take a leave of absence and come back, and so I took a couple of leaves of absence and came back. It was a short period of time but there was a whole movement going on. The Black Arts Movement was not just local. It was here on the East Coast and the West Coast during that time. But the inception of the Black Arts Movement goes way back to the time when slaves were brought here—the Black Arts Movement started then. And it was about resistance too. That's how I learned, for example by talking to Robert Williams. I met him through the Black Arts Movement while I was working with Amiri Baraka and another group called the Revolutionary Action Movement. They were supporters of Robert Williams and they had made him the president of that organization at that time. And they were doing a lot of things in support of him. Through that, and being around that, all of that shaped my ideas on art. When I got into the Black Panther Party what happened is that it seemed like all this stuff was coming at us, and it was being at the right place at the right time. During the Black Arts Movement, when they were talking about bringing Malcolm X's widow to the Bay Area, they had a meeting at which they asked me to come do the poster for

that event. They said there were some brothers who were coming over to do security, and they would be at the next meeting, and they decided they were going to do it. That was Huey Newton and Bobby Seale.

Marc: Do you have the poster for the event?

Emory: No. Nobody has it! [laughs] They're all looking for it! Everybody! [laughs] They're even looking for some of the props that we did back in the day. There were films and stuff. Even Danny Glover was part of this whole movement. Ed Bullins was another playwright, from the East Coast. There were a lot of people who were involved in this movement. I did a poster of Malcolm for the event. Betty Shabazz, Malcolm's widow, didn't respond immediately to their letter. So they said they knew this guy who was in prison, who was a follower of Malcolm, and he was in San Francisco staying at his lawyer's house, and they wanted to talk with him to see if he would write a letter to Betty Shabazz that would encourage her to respond much more quickly. They asked me to go to the house at that time. So I went with them and that was Eldridge Cleaver. Eldridge Cleaver wrote the letter, he wrote the letter and then she said she would come. Huey and all of them decided they would do the security. [laughs] So they had all of the security set up and went to the airport, met her at the airport, went on the plane, and escorted her off the plane with guns. Can you imagine that! [laughs] You can't do that today! Went through the airport and escorted her off the plane. And the first place she wanted to go to was *Ramparts* magazine, which was in North Beach in San Francisco, to meet Eldridge Cleaver, because she knew he was a follower of Malcolm at the time. And so I went out there and there was a big scuffle with the police. They told me to stand outside and just watch to see what's going on and that they were going in with her to meet up with Eldridge Cleaver.

Marc: He was coming out of jail at that moment?

Emory: No, he was in jail. He was working at *Ramparts* magazine as a writer. And Huey and them were interested in meeting him. They had this whole vision about the paper. They had seen his writings before, and they had been trying to figure out how to get in touch with him because they wanted him to be a writer for the newspaper. I'm just showing you how all this came together.

Marc: You and Eldridge Cleaver got to know each other very well at that point didn't you?

Emory: After that point, yes. Because Eldridge was on parole he couldn't be around people with guns or what have you, it would violate his parole. Nor could he join the Black Panther Party. He was assigned by *Ramparts* magazine—because *Ramparts* was pretty progressive—so that he could travel and cover the Black Panthers. At the same time Huey and them were always talking to him about being the editor for the newspaper they had this vision for, you see. So it was after Eldridge went to Sacramento, covering Sacramento as a reporter for *Ramparts*, that he said: the hell with it, I'm going to be a part of this. And he did. And he didn't get violated after that.

Marc: And he recommended you to work for the newspaper?

Emory: No, what happened was that we used to have a place called the Black House, where cultural events were going on, and he used to live upstairs. I came through one evening and Huey didn't know I had done the poster for the event. Eldridge told him that I was the one who had done the poster and they said how much they appreciated it and liked it. I came back one evening to see what was going on at the Black House and Bobby Seale was there. The first paper came out April 2,

1967, but it was a legal-size sheet of paper and it was done on a typewriter. And Bobby was at the table with a marker doing the headlines. And the paper was dealing with the murder of Denzil Dowell, a young Black brother, thirteen years old, who was mentally retarded and who was shot in the back by the Richmond police. And so they were doing an article on that event. When I saw Bobby working on it, I came in. No one was there except Huey and Bobby, and they were still talking with Eldridge, still trying to recruit him to join the Party so that they could start the whole process of the paper. And so I saw them working and I told them I could probably help them improve the paper, because I still had some materials from College like rub-off type and all this kind of stuff that could help them improve the quality of what they were doing. And I lived about a half-hour walk from there, because I had just walked from my house to there to see what was going on. And they said: "We're just about finished with this one but you seem to be interested." So I said I would go get my materials and come back. And they said okay and so I came back with my art materials and Huey said: "Well, we're finished with this here but you seem to be interested and we're going to start this paper, *The Black Panther*, and we want you to be the revolutionary artist for the paper and eventually we're going to build a whole Ministry of Culture," and the whole bit, "and you can become the Minister of Culture." And they said: "The paper will be like a double-edged sword: it can praise you on the one hand and criticize you on the other. But it will be us telling our story, from our perspective and our point of view."

And so that was their whole vision for the newspaper. And the first paper to come out, a tabloid paper, was the one we called the "May Day paper" because of when we went to Sacramento. That was the one that covered Sacramento. It came out on May 2 because May Day was on a Sunday, and we couldn't go to the State Capitol on a Sunday because nobody was there. So we went on that Monday. My basic inspiration

for the paper was the people and interpreting them in cartoons and listening to their feelings of pain and suffering and interpreting that in the artwork. But also, at the same time, you have these amazing posters coming in from Cuba, from OSPAAAL (Organization of Solidarity with the People of Asia, Africa and Latin America), *Tricontinental* posters, that I was exposed to—amazing artwork—and the artwork that I had seen at that time coming out of China and sometimes out of Russia, and some of the artwork that was coming out of the antiwar movement—work that came out of Vietnam, during the Vietnam War, amazing posters, Palestinian artwork. You used see a lot of that artwork as well. All those were the inspiration for what I wanted to do—not necessarily to duplicate it, but in terms of inspiration, in that context. So that was the foundation for how my art evolved. You could say that I was inspired more by movement art and by political art than the personalities of the individuals who have done the art.

Marc: We have the posters and images that you made for *The Black Panther* now transformed by Zapatista artists. What do you think when you see this translation?

Emory: Well that means it has a message that was universal and transcends the African American community and has a long life in relation to its meaning. It means the struggle continues.

David: Mia, can you also talk about your education? I guess the question is how did you get involved in activist art?

Mia: I went to the Art Institute of Chicago right after graduating from the University of Maryland, and I wanted to go as rapidly through the school system as possible. Six months after I was injured, I returned to the Art Institute and met Caleb Duarte, who was in the same sculpture department as me. We connected pretty well because there aren't

too many minorities at the Art Institute of Chicago. We became really close and began a creative partnership. While we were in grad school, Caleb was selected as one of the Mexican students to go to Chiapas. He had seen Jose Luis' paintings—a Zapatista painter there—and he had brought some home and we were both inspired by them. So after grad school I went to Mexico with Caleb. I also needed some help with my healthcare. I thought it was a good idea to go to Mexico and get involved with plant medicine and benefit from the way the people are in touch with the earth, the body, and the natural healing that we have within ourselves.

As soon as we got to San Cristóbal we found this space where the United Nations used to be. Our combined energy is pretty explosive. We're both dreamers and a little bit out there. We don't think in terms of reality. We think more in terms of what could be an amazing, creative endeavor. So we didn't have an immediate vision for the space. We didn't start with an explanation. People would come in and they wouldn't know what the space was and they would be confronted with so many questions. What is this? What do you guys do? How do you do this? Many of the projects we did were made with displaced communities. We opened our house to people so that whenever they wanted they could take a shower. They could stay over. We would take clothes to kids. A little kid lived in my car for about one year. When his step-dad would come home and abuse him he would live in our car. We had a little school for the street kids. That's also one of the reasons why we had to close, because we were so not based on making money but based on giving that we became unsustainable.

Acquiring a different ability became a path for me to understand people's struggles. I developed a strong sense of solidarity and learned to collaborate with many types of people and communities and continue to grow. I am more inclined to be solitary but over the years I have challenged myself to spread outwards and collaborate with people

Mia Eve Rollow, untitled, no date. Courtesy of Mia Eve Rollow.

as our struggle is collective and the best creations are done with other people. I wouldn't call myself an activist. I would say I have a love for life and light.

David: Saúl, could you say something about how you developed your art practice?

Saúl: I'm going to tell a little of my story first. The parents of my parents were bought. They were like slaves. My parents were not bought. They had gained their freedom but they were displaced. In 1930 my parents were freed and escaped slavery. They went to a place, which is a sacred forest on top of a mountain, a volcano on top of a mountain. In March 1982 the volcano erupted. Ever since they lived there the closest places were Tapilula and Pueblo Nuevo, and they didn't even know that the Zoque existed. The land became infertile and so they moved to a new territory. The government took my family and moved them to

Saúl Kak and Emory Douglas in the Zapantera House,
Leonard & Bina Ellen Art Gallery, Montreal, 2014. Photo by Mia Eve Rollow.

another place. This moving of people happened in different places in the Republic. They moved some to Vera Cruz, some to San Cristóbal, in Chiapas, and other places. And in all of the places that they went, everything was new. They had never seen highways and things like that. So when my people came to these different communities they were not very well accepted because they were from a different culture. In this place where I live now, Rayón, everyone is very poor. The government would give things to only some of the people in Rayón and so the society became very fractured. This is when I was born. My parents were old when I was born. They couldn't work, and they didn't have jobs. They were discriminated against because of their age. So, when I was young, many of my friends and I didn't have much to eat. We would have only water and maybe tortilla, or a drink made of tortilla. I suffered until I was about twelve without much to eat. The consequences of the volcano and then of the government making certain promises

La Pocha Nostra meet with Emory Douglas and EDELO in the Zapantera House, Leonard & Bina Ellen Art Gallery, Montreal, 2014. Photo by Mia Eve Rollow.

that they would help the community led to false hope. And so my parents and I looked for ways to survive. I went to those who were running businesses and did little jobs here and there so that I could find food to eat. I did go to school, however. I went to high school but I often went without anything to eat. I went to school without shoes. I went barefoot and I was discriminated against. I got my first pair of shoes when I was about fourteen. I then made the decision to leave home and try to find a way to make money, to help my family with what I earned.

From when I was a baby up until the time when I decided to leave I was always drawing—portraits of my parents, or of the chickens, or of the corn. That was always a part of who I was. I wanted to know all of Mesoamerica, what my roots were, and I visited all of the neighboring towns, Tabasco, and so on. I'm from Rayón but I wanted to give value to the greater part of where I was from. I began

to paint all of the things that were happening to me, everything that was around me that I could feel. The Zoque think that song, dance, music, art, everything has a great connection to the spirit, to the moon, to the stars, to the earth.

One night I dreamed I was on the plateau of a mountain where there was a lot of grass. I was painting and drawing and a fire began—a very tall fire. And so in my dream I started to think: how am I going to stop this fire? I was desperate because I was in this canyon with grass, and I didn't know how to stop the fire. So I thought that even if I ran away the fire would chase me, and there was no way I could survive. So I found three sticks that were like pencils and I found a gourd from which you drink corn. Inside the gourd there was black, white, and red. I took these long pencils that were more like brushes and I started to paint clouds over the fire. I would draw raindrops in the air and I drew clouds that are really big with a lot of rain so as to put out the fire.

From this point on I decided that I needed to enter more into art and more into the fight because I realized that the fire symbolized the things that were going on in my town and I needed to use art to be in resistance against the fire. I believe that it's my ancestors who gave to me in my dream the path of fighting through art. I work very hard to create work and to manifest and protest and go to different towns to fight for the people and try to put out the fire. I feel that art is the most humble and the most sincere way to fight and resist and to unify with the people, with the migrants, and with the displaced communities. From my childhood suffering I am able to suffer with the people, to care for my people, who have been assaulted. I've seen people with wounds, and I take them to the hospital and work with the people. I do murals in the communities, putting images of what is happening in these communities, for the communities. I feel very good working with the people where I'm from.

I was once in the middle of a big fight between criminals, migrants, and the police. In the middle of all this I realized how fragile we all are and I remembered my past, where I'm from, and how the heart can be hurt very easily. I paint for the people and work with the sick and also with words to give a mass communication that they need to stand up for their rights, that they cannot live in these conditions. So I try to give an example. One of the criminals wanted to attack some migrants, and so I got together with a bunch of migrants and we were able to confront them. When people are assaulted and lose their clothes they come to me and I find them some clothes. There was once a train that turned over and there were twelve people who died and many more who were wounded. I went with some other people to where the dead bodies were and we put up offerings of blue crosses. When I was walking along the tracks I found some of the clothes that we later gave to people. So I work with pain and I paint, manifest, and fight. I want these injustices to stop. I will spend the rest of my life fighting for the people, as did the Black Panthers.

When the government looks at the Zapatistas and says they're rebels it's really not true. What the people really want is to live without injustice. [Saúl shows a canvas, painted with words and stars beside each word.] These are the Zapatista demands: the earth, education, health, food, life, work, liberty, justice, democracy, independence, culture, information, peace. These basic things are very natural. It's what we need to live. They're the same things that the Black Panthers were asking for. These are what the stars are. If the communities had all of these things, then there would be no reason to protest. There would be no reason to rebel. If the people of Central America already had these basic rights there would not be people trying to emigrate, going on the trains and falling off of the trains, risking their lives joining criminal gangs. If the Black Panthers at that time had these basic rights as well they would not have risen up. This is what art

Saúl Kak (with Emory Douglas) showing a banner with Zapatista demands at the Leonard & Bina Ellen Art Gallery, June 28, 2014. Photo by David Tomas.

comes from. It comes from the need to create change. This is what creates Zapantera Negra as well.

The Zoque culture has existed since three thousand years before Christ. We have always lived exploitation, now from mining and hydro projects, which are displacing communities. The mines are contaminating the water and the earth. We are the poorest and we are the most forgotten of the people. We haven't been looked at for a long time. The Zoque culture is starting a movement of consciousness and resistance. We're starting actions but we're tired and fed up with everything. We don't know exactly what's coming, but we're starting a new movement of resistance. We want people to know how we're living. The government is not seeing and hearing us. There was a woman who was detained. She's an activist who fights for the earth, for people,

and for migrants. The municipal government has taken her from her home, calling her a criminal. It was her and her people who were the leaders of human rights. So we're not heard by the government, but we're attacked by the government. I just wanted to tell you what our situation is.

JOURNEY TO ZAPANTERA NEGRA

Rigo 23

IN OCTOBER OF 1989, the inaugural of the Feria Nacional de La Mexicanidad took place in Tepic, Nayarit, Mexico. An initiative of Celso Humberto Ramirez, then Tepic's governor, the fair promoted Mexican cultural identity and historical self-awareness. Local Cora and Huichol representatives were the guests of honor, but in a demonstration of the reach of La Mexicanidad, a handful of Chicano muralists from the Bay Area had also been invited.

When sudden illness forced a last-minute cancellation, Ray Patlán, with whom I had developed a strong student/mentor relationship, suggested I join the Bay Area delegation. The spirit which moved these artists was such they all deemed it more important that "each one teach one" than to scrutinize my dedication to the cause or my Mexican-ness. Hailing from the same geography as Columbus, having practically just arrived on the continent, and being a whole twenty-three years of age, I would have not stood a chance. Had I never boarded the plane, this would have been enough of a lesson, but I went, and brought with me three friends who paid their own way and took turns helping the other muralists. This trip became the first of many into the geo-cultural

region known as Latin America and the beginning of a long and still unfolding learning process.

During the festival, I met Yucaye Kukame (José Benitez Sanchez in Spanish, or Silent Walker in English), a Wixárika (Huichol) marakame and accomplished visionary artist with whom I would spend many afternoons enthralled by his art and words. He was my first encounter with the cosmogony and poise of an original people from this Continent. I had only been living in San Francisco since late 1986, and most things were new and exciting but these few weeks in Tepic were of a different magnitude. I returned to California with three of José Benitez's yarn-on-beeswax paintings, and the realization that I was a changing person. I immediately began a journey seeking evidence of the same cultural survival within US borders. This eventually led me to the Klamath River region of Northern California and the powerful Karuk, Yurok, and Hoopa worlds that still survive there.

In the early nineties, a short news item in one of San Francisco's weeklies grabbed my attention. It stated that Geronimo Pratt had, yet again, refused to appear at his own parole hearing at San Quentin Prison, a stone's throw away across the Bay. In the article, they referred to Geronimo as both a leading figure within the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense and a political prisoner. Having grown up in post-1974 Portugal, I was no stranger to the notion of state-sponsored oppression and racism. The nineties was a time of collective reckoning with the country's recent fascist regime and long colonial history in Africa. I was nevertheless stunned to read about political prisoners in California in a mainstream newspaper. So I cut out the news clip and pinned it to the wall right above my desk as a constant reminder of the new historical context I was now living.

As fate would have it, I was invited in the summer of 1994 to paint a mural with inner-city youth from Oakland as part of a program called YES (Youth Engaged in Service). The idea was to offer local youth

meaningful occupations and, at the same time, reduce their chances of "getting into trouble" while on break from school. We were to paint a mural on the façade of the Jubilee West Thrift Shop at 10th and Center Streets in West Oakland. At my first site visit, the organizers pointed out that Jubilee West was headquartered in the same building that once housed Post 188 of UNIA—the Universal Negro Improvement Association, the organization that Marcus Garvey founded in 1917. They asked that I include Garvey in the mural, as well as a portrait of Huey P. Newton in his iconic pose in the wicker chair. Excited by the unexpected developments, I return to my Mission District studio to start work on a sketch. Every time I lifted my eyes from the page, Geronimo stared back at me.

In the process of researching Huey P. Newton, cofounder with Bobby Seale of the Black Panther Party in 1966, I was reminded that he had been murdered a mere five years earlier and a couple blocks away from where Jubilee West Thrift Shop now stood. This, coupled with my awareness of the ever-growing number of Blacks trapped in California's booming prison system, led me to suggest the inclusion of a portrait of Geronimo Pratt—proclaiming his innocence—over one memorializing Huey Newton. I believed this would give the surrounding community a sense of vindication and hope and an incentive to remain in the struggle rather than dwelling on the trauma still festering from Huey's violent and tragic death. It took some self-convincing to muster the courage to make such a bold proposal to the Jubilee West organizers, but they were kind, heard me patiently, and promised to have an answer by our next meeting. After they had discussed the issue among themselves, their decision had been unanimous: I should go ahead and paint Geronimo's portrait. Unbeknownst to me, this turn of events was about to profoundly shape my life.

In the final design, Geronimo's portrait, prominently framed by a wide golden frame, spanned the full height of the mural. Only one of

his eyes was visible, peeking from a sliver of wall between two bar-covered windows. Running vertically along either side of his face ran the text: "Geronimo Pratt/Still Innocent." Throughout the morning workdays, the group of youngsters who turned up was a lively bunch, continuously playing practical jokes on each other and teasing me about my accent. Because they were not allowed on ladders, they would paint the lower parts of the mural, and after clean-up time I would work on the upper parts into the early evening. Day after day, as the sun slowly arched down on West Oakland's sky, the volume on the neighbor's record player would rise up. Warm and soothing, or sharp and frenetic jazz would envelop the block.

On one of those late afternoons, as I was wrapping up and about to head out, one of the neighbors called me from across the street from his front porch steps and asked, "Hey, where you from?" As was my habit, I told him "I'm from Madeira Island, Portugal." This caused some amusement and he repeated the question: "Yeah, but where you live?" I was barely done with the "o" in San Francisco when he cracked up, turned to his friend and said: "Didn't I tell you?! He don't even live around here." They both nodded and laughed some more. It was all uphill from there. First they offered to lend me taller ladders, then to fill my buckets with clean water, and lastly to keep the art supplies at their house, so I could work on Sundays when the thrift shop was closed. The jazz, in the meantime, never let up.

In one of our short, sunset-lit interactions the neighbor dropped the bomb, "Does Geronimo know you're doing this?" I remember being shocked by the question and feeling newly out of place. Had I somehow trespassed and done something wrong? "Well, he's in prison," I tentatively replied with tremor in my voice, no longer able to hear the jazz music or much else for that matter. "Yeah, but you can still write him." These words, though stern, rescued me from my temporary

deafness and after a brief silence he delivered his finale with masterful tempo: "He'd love to know you're doing this."

The BART ride back to 16th and Mission was surreal. I remained in a daze. It had never occurred to me that I could communicate directly with Geronimo and the history he represented. Sure, I was painting a mural about him with a group of young kids from West Oakland, but it never crossed my mind that I should write to him! Why would he care to hear from someone he knew nothing about? That said, I was in the situation to learn and be respectful. I knew the right course of action was to follow the neighbor's advice and I found out Geronimo's prison number and address, got over myself, and did just that: I wrote to him, introduced myself, my family, shared where I came from, what I did, and let him know I was painting a mural of him.

I could never have anticipated the intensity of the joy of receiving a letter addressed to "Nghuru Rigo" from Mule Creek State Prison—the pleasure remains unparalleled to this day. It was Geronimo who, via his letters, directed me to meet Emory Douglas and to do whatever I could to help shine some light on the magnitude of Emory's contribution to the struggle. "He is not only a revolutionary and visionary artist but a true selfless soldier who embodies the best of us all in the Central Committee." These were Geronimo's words. In the letters he also spoke of his family, how his father was Native American, a Cree from Louisiana who made a proud living by collecting, hauling, and selling scrap metal. He himself was born Elmer Pratt and gained the nickname Geronimo during his time in Vietnam, where he won two Purple Hearts for bravery in battle. As his maternal ancestors were from West Africa he replaced the slave brand "Pratt" with the Ji Jaga lineage. After returning home, armed with the GI Bill, he enlisted at UCLA where he befriended John Huggins and Bunchy Carter, joined and soon became Minister of Defense for the Black Panther Party.

A year after finishing the "Jubilee West Thrift Shop" mural I entered Stanford's Master of Fine Arts program. In my first week, during a break between classes, I found myself in one of the many campus bookstores. There I ran into a small, almost pocket-sized book in Spanish titled *Yo, Marcos*. I felt like a spoiled brat biking away with a too-easy-to-liberate book. But I knew I needed to read it. One year prior, in January 1994, I was in Portugal and the Zapatista uprising was front-page news. I had been eager to learn more about the movement ever since and the book's arrival felt like a divine gift. Marcos' use of Spanish was like a *Dismantled Spanish* echo to Fela Kuti's *Broken English*. It had a cumulative effect on my twelve-year relationship to Fela's unapologetic and thorough dismantling of the English language as a necessary step for the rebuilding of an African perspective. His *Spanish as a Language of the Indigenous* exposed the capitulations and distortions of the Mexican state's ode to Western civilization.

Together, Fela's and Marcos' glossary of broken and repurposed official Histories and Languages, engulfed and propelled me on a journey through which I am still navigating. I felt adrift on a canoe, which although tiny was not about to be swallowed up in the ripple waves caused by the mighty tankers of official narratives. This journey required swallowing enough water to know its taste, and trusting the chance encounters with the force of truth in order to chart a path. I spent my first semester at Stanford making a seven-by-seven foot portrait of Geronimo, now Ji-Jaga, using 28,000 plastic and metal push-pins, thumb pushed one at a time into four silent plywood panels—a meditation on time and perseverance. The finished portrait was included in the exhibition "Time and Time Again" at the Richmond Art Center in the North Bay.

On June 10, 1997, I found myself, camera in hand, at the Orange County Courthouse witnessing Geronimo's historical release after twenty-eight years of wrongful imprisonment. As he made his way to the front gates he was nearly lifted off the ground by the adoring crowd who

rushed towards him. The sky-piercing chants and heart-thumping beat of a Lakota drum circle nested on a nearby garden patch commanded the sonic sphere. Some of the dozens of journalists gestured towards the drummers to stop so they could better use their microphones and video cameras, but Geronimo asked them to keep going. "This is so auspicious that I should hear native chants as I walk to Freedom," he said. "What's your plan now?" one journalist screamed louder than the rest. "I plan to go see my mother. I've always been a mama's boy, and she has waited long enough." Eunice Pratt was then ninety-three years of age and had not seen her son for nearly a quarter of a century. A week later, on June 15, my parents were with me on the occasion of the Stanford University graduation ceremony. Like everyone else, I was handed a very official leather folder when called to the podium, only mine contained a note instructing me to turn in my final papers or I would not graduate.

An expanded version of the Richmond Art Center exhibit was scheduled to open on July 1 at the Watts Labor Community Action Committee at 105th and South Central in Los Angeles. However, with Geronimo's unexpected release twenty days prior, we had to quickly adapt and re-imagine much of it. Aside from the work dedicated to Geronimo's plight, an entire gallery showcased Emory's art. Mumia Abu Jamal and Leonard Peltier had a section each, and one of the largest galleries was dedicated to a local teenager who had been detained by the police for photographing graffiti on a rooftop. The exhibition was retitled "Guilty Until Proven Innocent—In Tribute to Geronimo and the Thousands."

July 1, 1997, was momentous. Geronimo turned down a combo of ringside tickets for the Tyson/Holyfield fight with private jet to Vegas, and instead chose to come to the Watts art show. It was the first time we would meet him in person, and when we were introduced he gave me a clear mandate: "This is what you do, your job is to spread information: Free all political prisoners." He added: "That portrait is bigger

than my cell was." Needless to say, Emory Douglas was there too, as were many legendary figures from the Black Liberation Movement.

It would take me over a decade for a chance to visit Chiapas. It came in the winter of 2008, nearly twenty years after my initial visit to Mexico and my encounter with Yucaye Kukame (Silent Walker). That fall, the Sixth Intergalactic Commission of the EZLN—Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional—had put out a call for like-minded people to converge in Oventic and CIDECI, in San Cristóbal de las Casas, for the First World Festival of Dignified Rage. The three-day series of talks at CIDECI—Universidad de la Tierra—was a great primer on Zapatista tempo and protocol, and the energy around the campus was inspiring and rebellious. More than a dozen buses filled with college students had travelled from Mexico City to attend. I was among the countless visitors from too many countries to name who had taken several airplane rides to be there. At night, campfires lined the entire perimeter fence separating the campus from the dirt road that serves the surrounding Colonia Maravilla.

After the festival, I returned to Oventic and was afforded a visit with the caracol's political commission, at the Good Government Junta building. Emboldened by the festival's energy, and having experienced firsthand the poetic license used by many a speaker, I garnered the confidence to ask the masked delegation facing me: "What would happen if you were invited to participate in an intergalactic encounter taking place in a different galaxy? How would you get there?" I got no verbal reply, but could see some of the eyes curving upwards behind the masks. Given the context, those clandestine smiles felt like a warm embrace. My outlandish inquiry had not been deemed disrespectful or condescending. I savored the sense of relief and the wonderful silence continued. Then I followed the question with an offer: "In case you might be interested, I would like to volunteer my services to help build such a spaceship according to your specifications." As a way of demon-

strating experience, I shared images of a replica of a nuclear submarine I had recently completed with autonomous Guarani, Caiçara, and Quilombola communities in Brazil's Mata Atlântica. The photographs were received with much curiosity and passed around the Junta delegates. I thanked them for their time and left them with a written version of my proposal.

A few days later I travelled to La Garucha, Caracol III, and made the same presentation to their Good Government Junta. As in Oventic, I was told they would consider it as long as I left a detailed written proposal, which I did. These were the first days of 2009. The agitated energy from all the outsiders converging on San Cristóbal for the festival was giving room to the quiet, fog soaked, long continuum of Zapatista time. I took a couple of days to unwind and camped at the caracol before heading back to San Cristóbal and then California.

Later that same month, fate would deliver a devastating blow. On January 25, 2009, my beloved father unexpectedly died on Madeira Island after a mere two days in the hospital. I had been with him, my brother and mother for Christmas, but had left hurriedly, breaking a family tradition, in order to arrive in Oventic on time for the 15th anniversary and the festival. I managed to return to the island, and my brother and I placed a beautiful Zapatista embroidery on our father's chest to accompany him on his final journey. It read, "*La Tierra no se compra ni se vende, se defiende*" [The land is not for selling nor buying, it is for defending]. I would not return to Chiapas for another year and a half. When I did, in the summer of 2010, I stayed again with my friend and collaborator Santiago Marcial. From him, I learned that a new community art space had opened in San Cristóbal de las Casas, started by a couple of artists who relocated there from the US. "It's a cool place called Edelo," he said. "Edelo? Is that a Mayan word?" I asked. "I don't think so," Santiago replied, "but they'll explain it to you."

When I met Caleb Duarte Piñon and Mia Eve Rollow—and their spirit dog Pinta—I immediately felt a strong kinship with them. They came to San Cristóbal armed with an overwhelming desire to contribute to the ongoing Zapatista effort. The work they were doing and how they were doing it was both inspiring and unapologetic. Theirs was a space that nurtured culture, with a doors-permanently-open policy and an ever-evolving program. One thing stood out right away: the Mayan street vendor children had full run of the house and came by whenever they pleased, which was very often. They were always armed with a not-easy-to-refuse deal: Carrots! Onions! Peanuts! Clay figurines! Mandarins! Oranges! Flowers! Or a need: to use the bathroom; to take a break from child labor; to draw; or to follow on-demand literacy classes from Mia or Caleb. Mayan children's smiles, fresh flowers, and fragrant fruits were always in abundance, as were giggles, half-finished drawings, alphabets, and number charts.

As it turned out, EDELO was not a word in a local Mayan language, but an acronym in Spanish: En Donde Era La Onu [Where the United Nations Used To Be]. I thought the name was genius—a place that describes itself not by what it is, or does, but by what was there before it came to be. This is common when one asks for directions from someone who has lived in a place long enough: "You make a left where the cinema used to be . . . etcetera." Those with an intrinsic knowledge of their environment know that some events are more memorable than others, and their daily language evidences the depth of their familiarity with the physical space they inhabit. In other words, this is the exact opposite process to corporate amnesia, where, for instance, an entire stadium changes name every few years and all the hired hacks follow suit without missing a beat. But the name EDELO also announces, and immediately occupies, the void left behind by that grandiose twentieth-century global organization with headquarters in New York City and Geneva. Yes, the one where a handful of the world's biggest arms

Rigo 23, *Space Corn*, Autonomous Intergalactic Space Program [*Programa Espacial Intergalactico*] led by Rigo 23 at the EDELO Space Center, 2011. Interdisciplinary community collaboration creating a conceptual depiction of the Zapatista Good Government Center in a spaceship that travels worldwide. Courtesy of Rigo 23.

manufacturers get to veto while all the other nations get to vote. As with all things Zapatista, theirs was a highly localized experience, with global aspirations and reach.

Depending on the time or the day you arrived at EDELO, you might think you had come to a literacy center for young Mayan street children; a support house for the hunger strikers camped in the main square; an Indigenous theater company; a bicycle workshop for alternative energy sources; a squat café; a loud underground venue for the budding Indigenous hip-hop scene; a residency/workshop for college students from the nearby towns and cities; a meditation and yoga center; a puppeteer and clown school . . . remarkably, the list goes on and on.

In one of the first conversations with Caleb and Mia about the intergalactic spaceship, I mentioned the impact the small Zapatista paintings had on me, how the painter Tomas had been the one to visualize the spaceship I was now building, using his small painting as the blueprint. Caleb then very matter-of-factly replied, "Those paintings

are what made us move here." That was quite a revelation. Here we were, after having spent years learning cutting-edge contemporary art at the San Francisco and Chicago Art Institutes and at Stanford University. Drawn to one of Mexico's poorest states by these small, stretched paintings authored by autonomous Mayan farmers—mostly self-taught teenagers who painted during their spare time—there wasn't much left to be explained. Soon after Caleb and Mia invited me to work on the spaceship project at EDELO.

What was to have been a month-long work-only residency evolved into a half-year live-in residency, and many more partners were introduced to the project through the relationships EDELO had already established with college students, autonomous authorities, and rank-and-file Zapatista supporters. Throughout the half-year, we spent countless hours sharing meals, visions, rooms, trips to the caracoles, and experiences, all in the service of better understanding where we were. In one such sharing session in EDELO's backyard, and while feasting on another huevos-à-la-Mexicana breakfast, the conversation turned to the similarities I found in the Black Panther and Zapatista movements. We were particularly moved by the power of their self-representation. Though both Panthers and Zapatistas had made literal use of guns, their use of visual and written language was to have a much more long-lasting impact. In fact, it could be argued that the only battles they lost were the ones involving literal violence, since theirs was no match for the violence that the state could muster. As the ebb and flow of self-determination movements roamed the globe throughout the twentieth century, theirs proved to have the longest durability in people's imaginations. Their indelible legacy was not the image of an isolated romantic leader—like Che Guevara—but rather the image of power embodied in the collective person, male and female, and the crowd. This was comprised of young urban Blacks with leather jackets, berets, and raised fists storming the houses of established political

power and of short, masked, Mayan peasants descending upon the cities from centuries of exile in the mountains.

It was in this context of long-term resilience and resistance that Cuba came up and I mentioned how amazing it was that Emory Douglas had not yet visited Cuba, of all places, and how I was trying to help make that trip come about somehow. With his characteristic calm, Caleb interjected: "Really? You guys are planning to go to Cuba? Do you think that maybe Emory would be interested in coming to Chiapas on his way there?" I replied that I obviously could not speak for Emory, but based on what I knew of him, I imagined that if we could find enough places serving vegan food in San Cristóbal, he would be here before we knew it! We all took a nice pause to laugh and then Mia added: "Come on guys, we have to do this." At that moment, over shared rice and beans, a new project was ignited.

Our conversation then turned to *The Black Panther* newspaper, its DIY aesthetic, and how it matched the aesthetics and modus operandi of all the urban Zapatistas organizing the world over. Three and four decades later, the Web now plays a central role. Caleb suggested that we should invite Emory to Chiapas, and once he is in our company we brainstorm about the different possibilities to use art as a catalyst for bridging these two movements. Then, out of nowhere, I offered, "Well, the name would be a no-brainer: Zapantera Negra." We all laughed and cleaned up the table for there was much else still to do in the day. Needless to say, Emory said yes to our invitation, and the floodgates quickly opened. At the January 2013 Centro Indígena de Capacitación Integral—Universidad de la Tierra (CIDECI-Unitierra) Third International Seminar of Reflection and Analysis, Emory greeted those assembled with an incendiary "All Power to the People!" They were on a gorgeous journey weaving together not just Panthers and Zapatistas but generations of ancestors who continue to strive for a just humanity.

ONE-WAY TICKET: AN INTERVIEW WITH CALEB DUARTE PIÑON

Marc James Léger: I would like to start with a few questions about what you had been doing as an artist before you decided to go to Chiapas. When did you get the idea to go there? What were the circumstances that brought you there?

Caleb Duarte Piñon: I felt like a hope was rising from Mexican Indigenous cosmology and from the forward-thinking political practices coming out of the Zapatista movement. It was based on their relationship to the earth, language, art, and on the not knowing. It was about the delinking of Western rationality regarding progress and success. It was not enough for me to consider capitalism as a great evil, or to create art within my own circles of artists of color, activist mystics, academics, and travelers. I had the inclination to seek out new inspirations and become part of a larger conversation, to seek out the adversaries of hierarchies of social organization and to experience creative forms of autonomy outside the controls of capitalism and the global market. I remember there being a spark that was inspired by the Zapatista movement after 1994, with the World Trade Organization protest in Seattle in 1999, the creation of the World Social Forum in

Brazil, the mobilization of environmentalists, and new creative forms of protest initiated by artists and collectives within the United States.

Before this I had gone through a strenuous process of private art school education, with its own ideas about art and life and values based on Western aesthetic philosophy. I then started an undergraduate degree as a very isolated and quiet student with a transnational identity, speaking both broken Spanish and English. I migrated with my family from northern Mexico as 'economic exiles' into the farmworking towns of the Central Valley in California. I grew up in the eighties and nineties during the Cesar Chavez United Farm Workers boycotts, marches, and hunger strikes. I was politicized at an early age but still did not understand the depths of American imperialism, manifest destiny, and overall white supremacy. Art school was to be an escape or a revelation, but it only confirmed my disappointment.

I struggled to find meaning and a justification for my work, to discover a newness or a 'universal' language and experience, and without really understanding art world audiences, avoided labels such as identity art, multiculturalism, Chicano art, and political art. I believed that the spectrum was larger than what was known. The political and social commentary in my work came from the direct experience of inequalities within our immigrant Mexican communities and what I learned about the history of colonialism and the realities of US imperialism, which was otherwise kept from me throughout my upbringing. I did not know. Art school then became a place of assimilation, of whitewashing and cleansing ancestral artistic practices and social convictions in order to fit into an art world dialogue as a token for an exclusive system. It seemed, with a few exceptions, that "they" believed that a white Eurocentric aesthetics was universal, the height of cultural production, and the best expression of human experience.

The San Francisco Art Institute, where I studied, was traditionally an experimental painting school. We schemed through the work of

Joseph Beuys, Fluxus, land art, and so on, but it felt somehow like ancient history and any political work was harshly labeled and dismissed. It seemed to me that the entire student population was suffering from a lack of substance, meaning, direction, and that in no way could one create works of originality or authenticity. The digital boom was happening, and we were trying to make sense of the postmodern artistic crisis.

Then 9/11 happened and that changed everything. The political rhetoric and the nationalism that was sparked in all areas of the political aisle left me silent. No one seemed to want to make art. It seemed to be the first time that Americans experienced a collective national trauma at that level, at home. In the meanwhile, the traumas experienced by Native and African-American communities were never mourned or taught to the general public. Hate crimes, race riots, fear, nationalism, revenge, the Patriot Act, the invasion of Iraq, Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, the Asian tsunami, the war on terror, Palestine. Because of all this my art consisted of dead Brown people and crumbled cement. But what I needed was something beautiful and extraordinary.

Fortunately, after graduation, I was invited by an organization called Peace Boat, based in Japan, to participate as an Artist Ambassador to the World Social Forum in India. The art I witnessed in India—made by activists, sex workers, and Indigenous farm workers, consisting of performances, altars, large installations by 'non-artists'—was momentous for me. I saw dead bodies being paraded down streets with flowers and statues of gods and goddesses in the celebration of life and death. I witnessed art existing beyond museum walls, here and now. Western art creates a clear separation between itself and the direct experience of sex, death, birth, and ritual in order to clearly analyze it and to protect it from emotional or physical distraction. I later discovered other movements within the art world that provided a sense of solidarity, such as the work of Arte Povera, land art, the Situationist International, the

Beat poets, Guerrilla Girls, La Pocha Nostra, Ana Mendieta, Gordon Matta Clark, Suzie Gablik, Alfredo Jaar, Joseph Beuys, Theater of the Oppressed, Teatro Campesino, and many others.

I then traveled to Cuba, Central America, Asia, and backpacked throughout Mexico and visited Zapatista communities. In 2008, I decided to return to graduate school and attended the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. I figured a Master's degree in sculpture would help me along in the future, but I still yearned for ancient street interventions, the color, smell, and sound of social protest, unrest, and celebration, to feel the power of life manifested through diverse artistic media—and so after graduating I moved to Chiapas, to such a place where I could see all of this for myself.

Marc: What happened after you arrived in Chiapas? Can you tell me about EDELO, En Donde Era La ONU [Where the United Nations Used to Be]? Was the UN building occupation the first thing you did in San Cristóbal de las Casas?

Caleb: While in grad school in Chicago, in 2008, I was invited by the National Mexican Museum in Chicago to fly to Chiapas to meet with and interview artists for a show in Chicago. I took that time to visit Zapatista territories and visited Acteal and the University of the Dirt in San Cristóbal de las Casas. Acteal is a small community that experienced a massacre of forty-five women and children in 1997. This was done by paramilitary groups supported by the Mexican government in retaliation for the Zapatista uprising. The three-day ceremony I witnessed was full of installations consisting of performance, painting, music, and video projections, with an international audience of artists and activists, which the so-called art world would have simply labeled a traditional religious Mayan ritual. For me it was a contemporary artistic and cultural event. It was here and in the

EDELO Inaugural Ceremony, *24 Horas*, 2009. EDELO opened this space by inviting over fifty artists for a twenty-four-hour celebration. Courtesy of EDELO.

now. I knew then that I needed to come back. In 2009, after graduating, the museum flew me back for a second visit for an art exhibition at the Jamie Sabinas Art Center in Tuxtla Gutiérrez, the state capital. I asked for a one-way ticket.

I then invited Mia Eve Rollow to join me, who has been a pillar of the EDELO project in her assertion of art outside conventional notions of reality. She had been an artistic partner and collaborator since graduate school in Chicago. We had been exploring isolated body sculptural performances due to specific circumstances she had found herself in. While in her first semester of graduate school, Mia suffered a car accident that left her paralyzed from the waist down. She looked into options to treat her severe nerve pain in the US and the limited options of Western medicine involved numbing drugs or an implanted

One of many dinners at EDELO for working children's families, 2010. Courtesy of EDELO.

electronic device that would send electric waves through her body. We knew about traditional healers in Chiapas and Oaxaca, and so she decided to join in on the journey to discover natural holistic medicines as well as art as a healing path. Her pain recurred every twenty minutes on a daily basis and it was severe. After four years of exploring holistic traditional medicines, we can say that Mia has found natural cures and practices for her physical condition. But before reaching this stage, we tried many things. I would bury her in hot sand for two hours a day, wrap her up in clay and canvas, spread creams and medicinal drops, and place heat with open cut plants taped over her body. It was a circus of body performances based on suffering and need, functional theatrical actions of self-inflicted false and lively hopes for cures. These isolated performances soon became community performances extending into larger social and political investigations. Looking back, everything was interconnected. Our personal and creative paths lined up in Chiapas.

When Mia moved to Oaxaca to work with a physical rehabilitation center in Piña Palmera, I left for Chiapas to look for a suitable art space. While in Chiapas I happened into the occupation of the offices of the United Nations where over one hundred community members occupied the central plaza. There were large crowds camping in front of the offices and about a dozen people made their way into the building for several days. At the time, I thought very little of it as I was on a mission in search for the perfect soon-to-be art space. This kind of occupation is a common practice in Chiapas. A few months later, I found that the United Nations had moved to another space and that the building had been empty for several months. I gave it a look and it was a perfect fit for what we had in mind. For the next four years, EDELO became a house of experimental art, community collaborations, musical and cultural events. It became a crazy house.

Marc: How did you approach the people in the community and how did you manage to get so many artists involved?

Caleb: San Cristóbal de las Casas is a diverse city of academics, activists, musicians, small theater collectives, environmentalists, scholars, tourists, gypsies, and travelers. It is a small town with several universities. It is a place with a high level of mystical energy where past and present histories are still very visible in the clash between Indigenous and mestizo identities. What was clear was that the artists needed a space to exhibit, perform, and create. EDELO became a meeting place and hub for these creative and restless agitated folks. All we did was open the doors, set up no real mission statement, and started organizing. Our personal mission was to see what would happen. We provided housing, studios, and practice space in exchange for organizational work and for the maintenance and functioning of the house—a really bad business plan as we later figured out. We opened

up a cultural bar to help with the cost of the space while hosting large alternative parties once a month as fundraisers for the rent. We set up weekly schedules and began to invite international and local artists to participate in residencies. Soon afterwards we had proposals of all kinds from artists wanting to participate.

The space was open to all possibilities and to different groups. We had traditional formal gallery openings as well as experimental performance pieces where every room of the building was taken over by performing artists. We covered the gallery with dirt, held university conferences, movie screenings, children's events, and hip hop concerts as well as fundraisers for Zapatista communities. We were all over the place. People did not know what kind of space it was. On a Tuesday you could run into a group of activists or anarchists; on Monday, university students; Fridays, gypsy traveling musicians; and the next day, an Indigenous women's theater group. The house itself became a living sculptural piece; the walls breathed creativity and transformed according to that month's participating residents. In some ways the building dictated the use of the space and how each event would come to flourish. We also organized events outside the city, in autonomous and Zapatista communities. We participated as artists in marches, occupations, and protests. We created large murals and public interventions in collaboration with local workers. There was no time to contemplate mistakes, ethics, or aesthetics. The work was raw, real, and provocative. We functioned as a "private" house in order to avoid city requirements and licensing and in order to work with greater fluidity. We felt an urgency to create a vast amount of work, in a calm and confident manner.

Marc: Can you tell me about the projects *Entierro* and *Bolero*? Based on our discussions with Mia you did some other projects with children, like opening an improvised school at EDELO and taking in

EDELO, *Rain Catchers*, 2010. A project focused on water rights and autonomy. Created with the community of *La otra campaña* at El Ambo Bajo, Chiapas, Mexico, 2010. Courtesy of EDELO.

some abandoned children. And of course the escuelitas were launched by the Zapatistas in August 2013. The goal of the escuelitas is to build autonomy, which is bound up with work and everyday activity. Is this a good way to think about projects like *Entierro* and *Bolero*? What was your relationship and working process with the children around EDELO?

Caleb: The piece *Entierro* was made in collaboration with a small autonomous community in Chiapas, members of the Other Campaign, an extension of the Zapatista movement, now called La Sexta. Autonomous here means that they had refused government funds, assistance, water, and electricity for over six years and refused to participate in the national or local political system. They were in the process of creating a small clinic, community store, and school. We had been working with them for three years, bringing artists, educators, and natural builders

EDELO, *Burial [Entierro]*, 2013. Video still of community performance with *La otra campaña* at Elambo Bajo, Chiapas, Mexico. Courtesy of EDELO.

for a variety of events. We saw the construction of their government center—a small cabin next to their temple—a pharmacy and clinic, and the pouring of cement in what was to become their meeting space. We also hosted events at EDELO in order to raise funds for electric grids for their meeting space. Elambo Bajo is a community of at least eighty families but expands to the rest of the municipality where many more families are members that live on isolated mountaintops. They were still paying for water as water trucks came to fill their water tanks for the month. The PRI and PAN, the two leading political parties, had their reservoir water ditches reserved for party members only, and violent situations erupted periodically between the two. In relation to this situation we created works like *Rain Catchers* and pretended to catch rainwater with large sheets of fabric as we paraded around the village with the children holding the fabric with sticks tied with yarn in order to promote self-determination and "living off the grid." We organized three-day arts festivals bringing in social sculpture, poetry,

mural painting, and *fútbol* tournaments in order to learn about and discuss the many different issues affecting the community. This is to illustrate the relationship we had been building with the community of Elambo before we created the *Burial* (*Entierro*) piece.

I am a mestizo, a mix of both Spanish and Indigenous blood, a mixture of many ethnicities. When I visit and work with Indigenous communities, I become "the white man" as opposed to the Brown, colonized Mexican immigrant to the United States. Experiencing white privilege was an awakening. In basic interactions I could feel the social arrangements and hierarchies that were the result of hundreds of years of violent colonization, oppression, and racism. I understood what it was to walk in the world as a white man and began to acknowledge the violent histories that my body carried: the histories of both the wounded and violated grandmother as well as the aggressor. As some funding was available through grants and fundraising I also began to notice my capitalistic indoctrination. I felt that getting work done with efficiency meant that more productivity equals greater reward. It took me time to recognize that time slows down within communities and things are achieved at a different pace. I constantly had to check myself, as these systems are deeply ingrained and are at the core of our learning. To break away from an individualistic and narcissistic civilization, no matter how progressive or spiritual one may think one is, the privileges that accompany the histories that the body carries need to be confronted and dealt with in order to experience true empathy, and to exercise an egalitarian sense of a just future. The Zapatistas teach us that. Through their movement, a confident manner rises from the glare in their eyes, which shine behind ski masks so as to demonstrate that we are all one.

Within this context we created the performance piece *Entierro*. Inspired by the work of the filmmaker Alejandro Jodorowsky, we used the body and community participation in acts of theater and psy-

EDELO, Video still from *Shoe Shiners [Boleros]*, 2011. Part of a three-week public intervention and performance with twelve shoe shiners from San Cristóbal de las Casas. Courtesy of EDELO.

EDELO, Video still from *Shoe Shiners (Boleros)*, 2011. Courtesy of EDELO.

EDELO, *Art Urgente* at La Galeria, San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas, Mexico, 2013. Performances, interventions, public actions, and final exhibition and traditional ceremony with Chamula artists, shoe shiners, and local artists. Courtesy of EDELO.

EDELO, Video still from a three-day sculptural performance with Bartolome Martinez, where he creates, stands on, and destroys his legs while speaking about his life. Zipolite, Oaxaca, 2012. Courtesy of EDELO and Piña Palmera Centro de Atención Infantil.

chomagic in order to alleviate ancestral traumas and wounded histories. In a morning fog, children chased and dragged my body into a ditch that we dug out with the help of the community. They then placed my body into the hole and proceeded to cover it with rocks and dirt. I was buried for fifteen minutes until one community leader decided that the performance piece was over. The work was mostly improvised, awaiting reaction to action. Mia then guided a group to follow her as she dragged her limbs into the grave. Her body, as a white woman with a certain physical disability, was also part of the power dynamics that we were trying to acknowledge and bury. Sometimes we need to allow the work to emerge on its own, meaning that a certain level of trust and risk must be given to magic. We need to surrender at times to the creative process, and we did. The piece became a game where we would point at a child and the mob of children would chase and catch that child and throw him or her into the hole. We could not communicate through language, as they speak only Tzeltal, so all our communication was through laughter and the gestures of the body. The piece *Entierro* is still developing.

About *Bolero*. In San Cristóbal de las Casas, child labor increased 397 percent between 2000 and 2010. There are 2,481 working children in this city of 280,000 people. Children work at selling artisanal products, candy, cigarettes, and fabrics. There are also many shoe shiners, trash pickers, and window washers in the center of town and around the markets of the city. When one walks through the cities of Mexico, shoe shiners, especially children, become a somewhat "beautiful" and possibly romantic or picturesque scene, uniting the present with the past. For many tourists or Western travelers, the sight of children cleaning shoes may cause a temporary sense of outrage towards the economic inequalities and working conditions that exist in Mexico today. Either way the children are mostly ignored. But for the children and their families, this work is a considerable part of the family

income. Perpetuating Mexico's racist colonial history, the Mexican political establishment imposes a naturalized ideology of inequality onto the Indigenous working class. In this way, the children simply become part of the colonial and architectural landscape that the city's history silently carries.

Bolero is an ongoing performance project that collaborates with ten Indigenous working children and youth in Chiapas. An initial seven-day workshop resulted in a four-hour public performance where gesso block casts were made in the size of their shoe shining kits. These gesso blocks were then carried to the center of town where the children carved out details of textured wood, nails, and cracks. Their hand movements mimicked the gestural movements of shoe cleaning. After four hours, they began to break and destroy the sculptures, sending pieces of gesso flying at the public. The questions asked had to do with labor versus play, creativity versus work, and working children now seen as artists.

We continued this investigation and workshops one year later. This time the sculptural performance was based on the ideas of physical disability, socially sanctioned poverty and inequality, and ideas of social mobility within the economic and political structures of Mexico. Within this five-day workshop, ten children and youth carved into gesso while conversations and discussions of these issues took place. Wooden boxes were built to the size of their feet and poured gesso covered their naked toes and ankles. This resulted in having cement-like blocks in the place of feet. In order to walk they had to carefully drag their heavy limbs little by little. Once in the center plaza they began to chip and carve the weight off their feet until fully liberated.

Bolero is a project that speaks to the issue of wealth inequity by exposing the realities behind child labor. It is an attempt to become physically "abnormal" while placing oneself in a public place for an audience's contemplation. At times some participants felt ashamed,

strong, entertained, and proud. At other times they felt creative and enthusiastic to "act," but at other moments, as Juan Díaz expressed while speaking in Tzotzil: "The ideas of ancestral slavery came to mind when dragging my foot in a line with the others while making our way to the center plaza."

During the residency program, many visiting artists wanted to work directly with the child street vendors and so we set up summer programs where musicians, circus people, and visual artists could work with the children around the city of San Cristóbal. It was consistent at times and not so much at other times since we had a large artist resident turnaround rate due to the nature of our project. Throughout the year, EDELO opened its doors after 2 p.m., at which time the children would come in and out of the building, becoming exposed to the artists, art courses, and artistic activities going on in the house. This contributed to promoting a growing relationship with the space. At its peak during any given summer, we could expect over thirty children and their mothers participating in our programs. During slower moments we had over seven children regularly visiting EDELO and participating in more intimate artistic sessions.

La escuelita Zapatista was created to celebrate the twenty years of autonomy achieved by the Zapatista communities. The Zapatistas had not opened up in such a way since 2006. Homes were opened to the outside world, to live, work, and learn for five days from the Zapatista families themselves. We helped register a group of international and local artists and activists to participate in the escuelitas and to paint a mural in Zapatista territory with artists Emory Douglas, Faviana Rodriguez, members from the Justseeds collective, and many others.

Marc: I'm interested in the mix of art and militancy that is at the core of both the Zapatista struggle and that of the Black Panthers. According to Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, now Subcomandante Galeano,

the Zapatistas have two or more strategies: one is fire, meaning military action, and another is the word—meetings, dialogues, communication. The two together refer to the important aspect of communal organization. As a supporter of *Zapatismo*, you participate in its organization. Could you tell me about this relationship between art and politics in terms of the Indigenous struggle in Chiapas? How do you understand this relationship in different contexts, for example, in Chiapas, on the one hand, in Mexico, and then translated to other contexts like California or Montreal?

Caleb: The idea that *Zapatismo* can exercise military action against the Mexican government is nonsensical. Fire in this sense is mostly symbolic. Yes, there is the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional, but it's theater, that of the great tellers of comedy and tragedy, with wooden sticks carved in the shape of rifles, working red *paliacates*—scarves—and homemade green shirts with stitched red stars in thread posing as military wear. The machetes used to clear corn crops and pathways through the jungles to reach the coffee beans now become a symbol of resistance for a campesino "military force." This is the poetics. But this EZLN army is still very real, real enough to keep paramilitary groups at a distance. They are there to defend their territory, but have not used arms since 1994. At the same time, the Mexican Army studied very well the art of theater. They march in and place sandbags at the feet of soldiers in order to create a center stage. Their theater involves heavy weaponry, green rain jackets, white-numbered helmets, and marching boots: a uniformed Mexican force with US helicopters and jets patrolling the jungle.

The Zapatista meetings and gatherings become another center for theater. When putting on the ski masks, the Zapatistas are beautiful performers, actors, and believers in their collective force. They uncomfortably settled into another role when they allowed farmers

and barely literate members to participate in the decision-making process for the first time. It is slow and confusing, when observed from the outside, but they can mobilize 25,000 marchers within a few days notice.

The relationship between art and politics, life and spirituality seems to be one and the same. This comes partly from the Mayan languages, where imagery and symbolism play a prominent role. To say good morning is to ask "how is your heart feeling today," and in response one would reply based on how your heart is today. The name for fruit is the "eye of a tree," a roof is called "the head of a house." Other examples are the textiles and colors, the mix of spiritual practices that have endured despite imperialism and colonialism and through the adaptations and assimilation of religion, embracing Catholicism while injecting earth-based practices for the pure survival of their spiritual beliefs. When such traditions, after five hundred years of slavery, isolation, and imperial rule, have such a close relationship to the earth and earth-based spiritual practices, then social organizing, politics, language, imagery, and spirituality have no distinction from art.

Marc: How do you relate your work to developments in the progressive art world more generally? Since at least 2000 there has been a significant development of socially engaged art. There is also the political importance of a renewed radical politics after 9/11, the "war on terror," and again after the 2008 financial crisis, with the Arab Spring, Occupy Wall Street, major protests in Greece, Egypt, Chile, Brazil, the UK, and elsewhere. What is most interesting or most important to you in terms of both art theory and political theory? How does this come into play in terms of Zapantera Negra?

Caleb: Zapantera Negra was a way for us, both the artists and the public, to exercise a living memory of past and present artistic and cultural

movements rising from the ground up, much like the movements you mention here. I like to compare the differences between the monument and the altar that is celebrated in Latin America and many Caribbean African cultures as a way to illustrate my views on why many artists, art organizations, and graduate programs are shifting their attention to more inclusive and diverse practices.

We can say that the monument is an immense solid architectural structure or statue, protruding from the earth, almost in a violent aggressive form that imposes itself in the public realm; therefore we, as a society, encourage monuments to do our memory work for us, leading us to becoming that much more forgetful. This seems to encourage a selective collective memory that benefits those in power.

What I have found by working with Zapatista and Mexican communities is that the realm of memory takes shape through some kind of magical realism, where the Aztec Empire and Spanish conquest are still very much present in everyday life. The altar, small shrines or "installations" placed at the corners of homes, temples, and in public spaces throughout Mexico, demonstrate this kind of fluid memory that is created and maintained by the very people who wish to practice a "living memory." Altars change from day to day in an exchange between objects and people and in participatory acts of remembering, with candles and tequila bottles, sugar skulls, and photos of loved ones that are in constant transition.

Once the transfer of memories or ideas through objects and actions is no longer the center and purpose of creation, then the object becomes propaganda and is no longer an expression of the artist or the people. I can then understand why it is that the progressive art world is shifting paths towards a more comprehensive approach to understanding art, the object, and participatory action. We need to see art become a more substantive and sustaining altar than an unyielding monument. It brings us closer to the 'real' thing. We remember, learn from, and

honor the artists and collectives of both rebels and sellouts from the last century: the Dadaists and Fluxus, the existentialists and the minimalists, the mothers of the Plaza de Mayo in Argentina, with their protests as performance for their disappeared children, the Black Panther Party, and the Abstract Expressionists. In a 'social practice' we hold close to each artistic movement by creating collaborations between artists and actors from different disciplines in the development of artworks that avoid the classification of an artistic movement, hoping to liberate the artist from the pressures of art history and the demands of creating 'newness.' It is now an even wider open field to create. Authenticity is all around us.

Marc: Have Indigenous and Zapatista poetics influenced your work or your thinking? It seems like there is a real mix of Euro-Latin culture involved as well as Indigenous cosmology and even myth-making. I find it to be a very powerful and evocative, at times tactical strategy, very user-friendly and open to different expressions, but at the same time it has a definite 'grammar,' with the use and re-use of specific symbols and collective forms—ski masks, corn, dolls, fables, encuentros, marches, occupations, communiqués, etc.

Caleb: I think Zapatismo poetics is very much Mexican poetics but they have become the current masters. This language that I have learned from them has given me much more freedom and confidence to seek out an artistic language without being afraid of the 'white gaze' and without seeking institutional validation. This is a big step in the decolonization of the mind, not seeking the approval of one's beauty from those in political, economic, and cultural power. The purpose is to communicate with the imagery that is closest to us. In Zapatismo it may be corn, the earth, dolls made of old clothes and sheep's fur, marches as public demonstrations, and their communiqués as their

Los Conchitas [The Shells] occupying the Plaza in San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas, Mexico, 2010. EDELO arts activities with displaced community. Courtesy of EDELO.

EDELO, Political Prisoner Hunger Strike, San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas, Mexico, 2010. Three-week public intervention and performance with the family members of twelve political prisoners on a forty-day hunger strike. Courtesy of EDELO.

poetics. For me it may be construction materials, digging holes, and organizing community art gatherings as acts of psychomagic. It is a good place from which to make art.

What inspires me about Zapatismo is their sense of humor. I have come to realize, through their struggle, that art has been the vehicle of reason—meaning that we are able to admit, or come to the conclusion that sometimes we don't know if we have reached a moment of enlightenment or that we are experiencing a moment of insanity. This insanity, or not knowing, keeps us on edge, constantly questioning and exploring who we are and why we are here, through a variety of media. Zapatismo speaks to this by first practicing before theorizing and by dedicating struggle to the infinite possibilities of the next five hundred years, as opposed to the homogenization and commercialization of the body. It means walking in the night and trusting the process.

Marc: What has it been like to work with Emory and how has bringing in the context of Black Panther history and philosophy affected your work in Chiapas?

Caleb: Working with Emory has been a beautiful blessing. The stories he has shared with me about the BPP struggle while driving through the jungles of Chiapas or when waiting at the gates for hours in Zapatista communities have been revealing. We celebrated the New Year in 2013 in Zapatista territory where hundreds of masked young Zapatistas danced until five in the morning. We were a group of less than thirty specially invited to attend that celebration. I think spending time with Emory brought me closer to the history of the civil rights movement in the United States. It peeled that movement off the pages of history books. It brought me closer not only to the Black struggle of the 1960s and seventies, but of socialist workers' struggles. The Black Panthers were part of a larger international conversation

disguised as a domestic radical and militant group. But it was their strategy to portray the Black figure as an angry "I won't take this shit no more" kind of attitude. Emory's works strategically frightened the white establishment while empowering the Black community. But inside the BPP organizational structure there were Buddhists, vegans, lesbians, gays, whites, Christians, Catholics, rock stars, teachers, lawyers, and workers. It has been inspiring to be close to him and his work as he leads through example while drawing quietly.

PLATFORMS

THE BLACK PANTHER PARTY FOR SELF-DEFENSE TEN-POINT PLATFORM AND PROGRAM

1. WE WANT FREEDOM. WE WANT POWER TO DETERMINE THE DESTINY OF OUR BLACK AND OPPRESSED COMMUNITIES. We believe that Black and oppressed people will not be free until we are able to determine our destinies in our own communities ourselves, by fully controlling all the institutions which exist in our communities.

2. WE WANT FULL EMPLOYMENT FOR OUR PEOPLE. We believe that the federal government is responsible and obligated to give every person employment or a guaranteed income. We believe that if the American businessmen will not give full employment, then the technology and means of production should be taken from the businessmen and placed in the community so that the people of the community can organize and employ all of its people and give a high standard of living.

3. WE WANT AN END TO THE ROBBERY BY THE CAPITALISTS OF OUR BLACK AND OPPRESSED COMMUNITIES. We believe that this racist government has robbed us and now we are demanding

the overdue debt of forty acres and two mules. Forty acres and two mules were promised one hundred years ago as restitution for slave labor and mass murder of Black people. We will accept the payment in currency which will be distributed to our many communities. The American racist has taken part in the slaughter of over fifty million Black people. Therefore, we feel this is a modest demand that we make.

4. WE WANT DECENT HOUSING, FIT FOR THE SHELTER OF HUMAN BEINGS. We believe that if the landlords will not give decent housing to our Black and oppressed communities, then the housing and the land should be made into cooperatives so that the people in our communities, with government aid, can build and make decent housing for the people.

5. WE WANT EDUCATION FOR OUR PEOPLE THAT EXPOSES THE TRUE NATURE OF THIS DECADENT AMERICAN SOCIETY. WE WANT EDUCATION THAT TEACHES US OUR TRUE HISTORY AND OUR ROLE IN THE PRESENT-DAY SOCIETY. We believe in an educational system that will give to our people a knowledge of self. If you do not have knowledge of yourself and your position in the society and in the world, then you will have little chance to know anything else.

6. WE WANT COMPLETELY FREE HEALTH CARE FOR ALL BLACK AND OPPRESSED PEOPLE. We believe that the government must provide, free of charge, for the people, health facilities which will not only treat our illnesses, most of which have come about as a result of our oppression, but which will also develop preventive medical programs to guarantee our future survival. We believe that mass health education and research programs must be developed to give all Black and oppressed people access to advanced scientific and

medical information, so we may provide ourselves with proper medical attention and care.

7. WE WANT AN IMMEDIATE END TO POLICE BRUTALITY AND MURDER OF BLACK PEOPLE, OTHER PEOPLE OF COLOR, ALL OPPRESSED PEOPLE INSIDE THE UNITED STATES. We believe that the racist and fascist government of the United States uses its domestic enforcement agencies to carry out its program of oppression against Black people, other people of color and poor people inside the United States. We believe it is our right, therefore, to defend ourselves against such armed forces and that all Black and oppressed people should be armed for self-defense of our homes and communities against these fascist police forces.

8. WE WANT AN IMMEDIATE END TO ALL WARS OF AGGRESSION. We believe that the various conflicts which exist around the world stem directly from the aggressive desires of the US ruling circle and government to force its domination upon the oppressed people of the world. We believe that if the United States government or its lackeys do not cease these aggressive wars it is the right of the people to defend themselves by any means necessary against their aggressors.

9. WE WANT FREEDOM FOR ALL BLACK AND OPPRESSED PEOPLE NOW HELD IN US FEDERAL, STATE, COUNTY, CITY, AND MILITARY PRISONS AND JAILS. WE WANT TRIALS BY A JURY OF PEERS FOR ALL PERSONS CHARGED WITH SO-CALLED CRIMES UNDER THE LAWS OF THIS COUNTRY. We believe that the many Black and poor oppressed people now held in US prisons and jails have not received fair and impartial trials under a racist and fascist judicial system and should be free from incarceration.

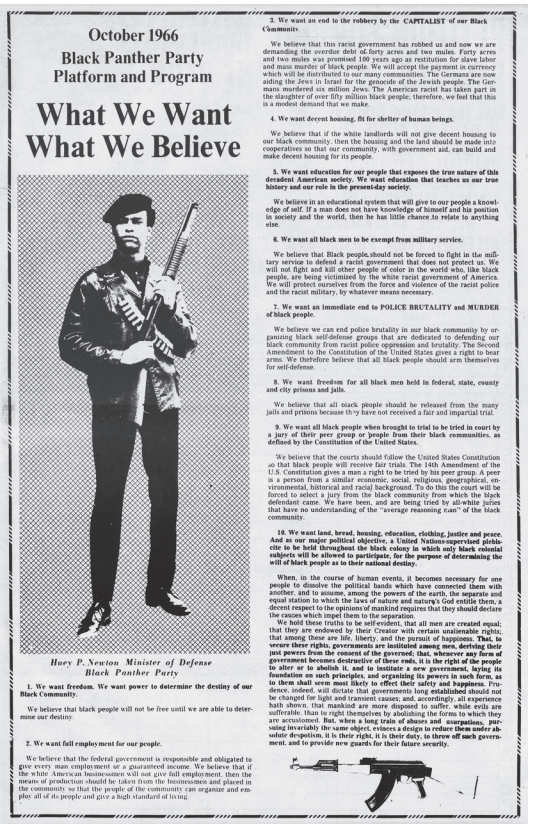
We believe in the ultimate elimination of all wretched, inhuman penal institutions, because the masses of men and women imprisoned inside the United States or by the US military are the victims of oppressive conditions which are the real cause of their imprisonment. We believe that when persons are brought to trial they must be guaranteed, by the United States, juries of their peers, attorneys of their choice and freedom from imprisonment while awaiting trial.

10. WE WANT LAND, BREAD, HOUSING, EDUCATION, CLOTHING, JUSTICE, PEACE, AND PEOPLE'S COMMUNITY CONTROL OF MODERN TECHNOLOGY. When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bonds which have connected them with another, and to assume, among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature and nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that, whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute a new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and, accordingly, all experience hath shown that mankind are most disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than

to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But, when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security.

Written October 15, 1966, by Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale. Modified March 29, 1972. Published in *The Black Panther*, Saturday June 10, 1972, page 18.



October 1966
Black Panther Party
Platform and Program

What We Want
What We Believe

Huey P. Newton Minister of Defense
Black Panther Party

1. We want freedom. We want power to determine the destiny of our Black Community.

We believe that black people will not be free until we are able to determine our destiny.

2. We want full employment for our people.

We believe that the federal government is responsible and obligated to give every man employment or a guaranteed income. We believe that if the white American businessmen will not give full employment, then the means of production should be taken from the businessmen and placed in the community so that the people of the community can organize and employ all of its people and give a high standard of living.

3. We want an end to the robbery by the CAPITALIST of our Black Communities.

We believe that this racist government has robbed us and now we are demanding the overdue debt of forty acres and two mules. Forty acres and two mules was promised 100 years ago as restitution for slave labor and mass murder of black people. We will accept the payment in currency which will be distributed to our many communities. The Germans are now aiding the Jews in Israel for the genocide of the Jewish people. The Germans murdered six million Jews. The American racist has taken part in the slaughter of over fifty million black people; therefore, we feel that this is a modest demand that we make.

4. We want decent housing, fit for shelter of human beings.

We believe that if the white landlords will not give decent housing to our black community, then the housing and the land should be made into cooperatives so that our community, with government aid, can build and make decent housing for its people.

5. We want education for our people that exposes the true nature of this decadent American society. We want education that teaches us our true history and our role in the present-day society.

We believe in an educational system that will give to our people a knowledge of self. If a man does not have knowledge of himself and his position in society and the world, then he has little chance to relate to anything else.

6. We want all black men to be exempt from military service.

We believe that Black people should not be forced to fight in the military service to defend a racist government that does not protect us. We will not fight and kill other people of color in the world who, like black people, are being victimized by the white racist government of America. We will protect ourselves from the force and violence of the racist police and the racist military, by whatever means necessary.

7. We want an immediate end to POLICE BRUTALITY and MURDER of black people.

We believe we can end police brutality in our black community by organizing black self-defense groups that are dedicated to defending our black community from racist police oppression and brutality. The Second Amendment to the Constitution of the United States gives a right to bear arms. We therefore believe that all black people should arm themselves for self-defense.

8. We want freedom for all black men held in federal, state, county and city prisons and jails.

We believe that all black people should be released from the many jails and prisons because they have not received a fair and impartial trial.

9. We want all black people when brought to trial to be tried in court by a jury of their peer group or people from their black communities, as defined by the Constitution of the United States.

We believe that the courts should follow the United States Constitution so that black people will receive fair trials. The 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution gives a man a right to be tried by his peer group. A peer is a person from a similar economic, social, religious, geographical, environmental, historical and racial background. To do this the court will be forced to select a jury from the black community from which the black defendant came. We have been, and are being tried by all-white juries that have no understanding of the "average reasoning man" of the black community.

10. We want land, bread, housing, education, clothing, justice and peace. And as our major political objective, a United Nations-supervised plebiscite to be held throughout the black colony in which only black colonial subjects will be allowed to participate, for the purpose of determining the will of black people as to their national destiny.

When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume, among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature and nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. **That, to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that, whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute a new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness.** Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and, accordingly, all experience hath shown, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. **But, when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security.**

Black Panther Party Platform and Program, 1966. Page from *The Black Panther* newspaper. Courtesy of Sean Stewart, Babylon Falling.

ORDER FROM THE BLACK PANTHER NATIONAL CENTRAL COMMITTEE

OUTLINE OF RESPONSIBILITIES BY RANK-AND-FILE BLACK PANTHER PARTY MEMBERS

BLACK PANTHER PARTY MEMBERS
(From Captains to Buck Private Panthers—Starting with the Latter)

Authority	Rank
13: PANTHER IN TRAINING (6 weeks)	**BUCK PRIVATE**

1. Six weeks of Political Education classes. (Must attend all political education classes before application.)
2. Political propaganda work. (Must report for every assignment.)
3. Every new member must acquire a piece and a beret. (Six week deadline.)
4. Field stripping of weapons must be known. Firing practice also a necessity.
5. Specifics on other materials and information that must be known and applied in order to become an official Party member:
   a. Every issue of Panther newspaper must be read.

b. Ten Point Platform and Program of BPP must be known by heart.

c. Legal first-aid must be known by heart.

d. National organization of existing rank and file must be known by heart.

e. "We must affirm anew the discipline of the Party":

i. Eight points of attention and three points of discipline;

ii. Major political objectives and subjectivism;

iii. Combat liberalism;

iv. Cardinal rules and motto;

v. Rules of the Black Panther Party must be known by heart.

All new members must complete the above. Captains will designate as to who has completed all of the above and is thus a member of the Black Panther Party in good standing. All present members who have not successfully completed the above will be placed on probation until all requirements are met.

Authority	Rank
12: PANTHER MEMBERS	**PRIVATE**

No one is a Panther member in good standing until they have completed the six-week training, successfully.

1. Reading of *The Black Panther* newspaper every issue, and especially before selling.
2. Each person must submit to their Section Leaders or Captains daily reports of work.

3. Each Panther must know chain of command and the general duties of all rank-and-file members of the Black Panther Party.
4. All Panthers are to practice criticism and self-criticism as it is related to organizational and political work.
5. All Panthers must do daily political work and organizational work, as work is assigned to them.
6. All Panthers must do at least two hours study a day, and keep up with the daily news.
7. All Panthers continue political education classes as they progress to higher levels of political education within the Party.
8. All Panthers must keep sharp on firing practice; keeping their weapons cleaned in private; understanding and practicing safety of weapons at all times.
9. All Panthers must obey all orders given to them and carry out their duties in a responsible fashion.

Authority — Rank

11: SUB-SECTION LEADER — CORPORAL

No Panther member who is a Sub-Section Leader will have this authority unless duly appointed by a Captain or coordinator in conjunction with his Section Leader.

1. Sub-Section Leader must build and construct a squad of Panther members who are dedicated and have successfully completed their six-weeks training.
2. He must maintain daily contact with his squad and also with his Section Leader or Captain.
3. Must know the whereabouts of his squad, twenty-four hours a day, and know how to contact them. Must also know how to contact his Section Leader and report to him daily.

4. Must spend at least two hours a day studying and keeping up with all daily news so as to keep politically aware.
5. Should work in the community where he lives, or is assigned to conduct propaganda, know the community problems, and know the existing business establishments by categories in his sub-section and the general number of residents.
6. Must keep a check on all the Panther members of his squad in the areas of:
   a. How well they do their propaganda work;
   b. Firing practice in private sessions known only to them (and field stripping of weapons);
   c. How well they know the rules and other materials of the party line;
   d. Checking on application of what has been studied by his squad members. This should be checked constantly through observation of street training and what they learn from the masses in the community.
7. Sub-Section Leaders must collect daily reports from squad members and then relay them to Section Leaders.

Authority	Rank
10: SECTION LEADERS	**SERGEANT**

1. Coordinate the distribution of propaganda materials to all Sub-Section Leaders:

   Kind of materials: Newspapers
   Leaflets
   Posters
   etc.

2. Dispatch crews or whole squads to do specific political work assigned to you by your Captains.

3. If ordered, implement security or take responsibility for security.
4. When a Section Leader is in charge of an office of the BPP, he will run that office like all other offices are run abiding by rules and the political line and organizational operations of the Party:
   a. Keeping office clean;
   b. No drinking in building;
   c. No narcotic in or about office, etc.;
5. Must have knowledge of all existing Panther members squads, and Sub-Section Leaders in his section.
6. Section Leaders are drill leaders and must schedule weekly trips where all Panther members in his section get drill practice.
7. Section Leaders must set up political education classes for new members joining the party who are in his section, and keep a record as to what new members have completed their six week training, successfully.

Authority	Rank
9: SECURITY	**LIEUTENANT**

"This Operation Is Handled Completely Underground."

Authority	Rank
8. COORDINATORS	**CAPTAIN**

1. Coordinate all political and organizational work and assign the said work to said Section Leaders.
2. Check complaints from community.
3. Handle contradictions among members, the Party and the community.

4. Hold meetings of Section Leaders, coordinate rallies, dinners, and other public functions.
5. Direct security.
6. Head Section Leaders' political education classes.
7. Captains do everything necessary.

POSITION PAPER ON REVOLUTIONARY ART

Emory Douglas, Minister of Culture, Black Panther Party

Revolutionary Art does not demand any more sacrifice from the revolutionary artist than what is demanded from a traitor who draws for the oppressor. Therefore, the creation of revolutionary art is not a tragedy, but an honor and duty that will never be refused.

Revolutionary Art begins with the program that Huey P. Newton instituted with the BLACK PANTHER PARTY. REVOLUTIONARY ART, like the Party, is for the whole community and its total problems. It gives the people the correct picture of our struggle, whereas the Revolutionary Ideology gives the people the correct political understanding of our struggle. Before a correct visual interpretation of the struggle can be given, we must recognize that Revolutionary Art is an art that flows from the people. It must be a whole and living part of the people's lives, their daily struggle to survive. To draw about revolutionary things, we must shoot and/or be ready to shoot when the time comes. In order to draw about the people who are shooting, we must capture the true revolution in a pictorial fashion. We must feel what the people feel who throw rocks and bottles at the oppressor so that when we draw about it we can raise their level of conscious-

ness to hand-grenades and dynamite to be launched at the oppressor. Revolutionary Art gives a physical confrontation with tyrants, and also enlightens the people to continue their vigorous attack by educating the masses through participation and observation.

Through the Revolutionary Artist's observations of the people, we can picture the territory on which we live (as slaves): project maximum damage to the oppressor with minimum damage to the people, and come out victorious.

The Revolutionary Artist's talents are just one of the weapons he uses in the struggle for Black People. His art becomes a tool for liberation. Revolutionary Art can thereby progress as the people progress because the People are the backbone to the Artist and not the Artist to the People.

To conceive any type of visual interpretations of the struggle, the Revolutionary Artist must constantly be agitating the people, but before one agitates the people as the struggle progresses one must make strong roots among the masses of the people. Then and only then can a Revolutionary Artist renew the visual interpretation of Revolutionary Art indefinitely until liberation. By making these strong roots among the masses of the Black People, the Revolutionary Artist rises above the confusion that the oppressor has brought on the colonized people, because all of us (as slaves) from the Christian to the brother on the block, the college student and the high school dropout, the street walker and the secretary, the pimp and the preacher, the domestic and the gangster: all the elements of the ghetto can understand Revolutionary Art.

The ghetto itself is the gallery for the Revolutionary Artist's drawings. His work is pasted on the walls of the ghetto; in storefront windows, fences, doorways, telephone poles and booths, passing buses, alleyways, gas stations, barber shops, beauty parlors, laundromats, liquor stores, as well as the huts of the ghetto.

This way the Revolutionary Artist educates the people as they go through their daily routine, from day to day, week to week, and month to month. This way the Revolutionary Artist cuts through the smokescreens of the oppressor and creates brand new images of Revolutionary action—for the total community.

Revolutionary Art is an extension and interpretation to the masses in the most simple and obvious form. Without being a revolutionary and committed to the struggle for liberation, the artist could not express revolution at all. Revolutionary Art is learned in the ghetto from the pig cops on the beat, demagogue politicians and avaricious businessmen. Not in the schools of fine art. The Revolutionary Artist hears the people's screams when they are being attacked by the pigs. They share their curses when they feel like killing the pigs, but are unequipped. He watches and hears the sounds of the footsteps of Black People trampling the ghetto streets and translates them into pictures of slow revolts against the slave masters, stomping them in their brains with bullets, so that we can have power and freedom to determine the destiny of our community and help to build "our world."

Revolutionary Art is a returning from the blind, whereas we no longer let the oppressor lead us around like watchdogs.

Originally published as "Position Paper #1: On Revolutionary Art" in *The Black Panther*, Sunday, October 20, 1968, page 5.

FOURTH DECLARATION OF THE LACANDÓN JUNGLE

TODAY WE SAY:
¡WE ARE HERE!
¡WE ARE REBEL DIGNITY,
THE FORGOTTEN OF THE HOMELAND!

All those communities, all those who work the land, all whom we invite to stand on our side so that together we may give life to one sole struggle, so that we may walk with your help.

We must continue to struggle and not rest until the land is our own, property of the people, of our grandfathers, and that the toes of those who have paws of rocks which have crushed us to the shadow of those who loom over us, who command us; that together we raise with the strength of our heart and our hand held high that beautiful banner of the dignity and freedom of we who work the land. We must continue to struggle until we defeat those who have crowned themselves, those who have helped to take the land from others, those who make much money with the labor of people like us, those who mock us in their estates. That is our obligation of honor, if we want to be called men of honesty and good inhabitants of our communities.

Now then, somehow, more than ever, we need to be united, with all our heart, and all our effort in that great task of marvelous and true unity, of those who began the struggle, who preserve purity in their heart, guard their principles and do not lose faith in a good life.

We beg that those who receive this manifesto pass it on to all the men and women of those communities.

—Original Zapatista manifesto written in Nahuatl by Emiliano Zapata, Reform, Liberty, Justice, and Law Chief General of the Southern Liberation Army

I

TO THE PEOPLE OF MEXICO:
TO THE PEOPLES AND GOVERNMENTS
OF THE WORLD:

Brother and Sisters:

The flower of the word will not die. The masked face which today has a name may die, but the word which came from the depth of history and the earth can no longer be cut by the arrogance of the powerful. We were born of the night. We live in the night. We will die in her. But the light will be tomorrow for others, for all those who today weep at the night, for those who have been denied the day, for those for whom death is a gift, for those who are denied life. The light will be for all of them. For everyone everything. For us pain and anguish, for us the joy of rebellion, for us a future denied, for us the dignity of insurrection. For us, nothing.

Our fight has been to make ourselves heard, and the bad government screams arrogance and closes its ears with its cannons.

Our fight is caused by hunger, and the gifts of the bad government are lead and paper for the stomachs of our children.

Our fight is for a roof over our heads which has dignity, and the bad government destroys our homes and our history.

Our fight is for knowledge, and the bad government distributes ignorance and disdain.

Our fight is for the land, and the bad government gives us cemeteries.

Our fight is for a job which is just and dignified, and the bad government buys and sells our bodies and our shames.

Our fight is for life, and the bad government offers death as our future.

Our fight is for respect for our right to sovereignty and self-government, and the bad government imposes laws of the few on the many.

Our fight is for liberty of thought and walk, and the bad government builds jails and graves.

Our fight is for justice, and the bad government consists of criminals and assassins.

Our fight is for history and the bad government proposes to erase history.

Our fight is for the homeland, and the bad government dreams with the flag and the language of foreigners.

Our fight is for peace, and the bad government announces war and destruction.

Housing, land, employment, food, education, independence, democracy, liberty, justice, and peace. These were our banners during the dawn of 1994. These were our demands during that long night of five hundred years. These are, today, our necessities.

Our blood and our word have lit a small fire in the mountain and we walk a path against the house of money and the powerful. Brothers

and sisters of other races and languages, of other colors, but with the same heart now protect our light and in it they drink of the same fire.

The powerful came to extinguish us with its violent wind, but our light grew in other lights. The rich still dream about extinguishing the first light. It is useless; there are now too many lights and they have all become the first.

The arrogant wish to extinguish a rebellion which they mistakenly believe began in the dawn of 1994. But the rebellion which now has a dark face and an Indigenous language was not born today. It spoke before with other languages and in other lands. This rebellion against injustice spoke in many mountains and many histories. It has already spoken in Nahuatl, Paipai, Kiliwa, Cucapá, Cochimi, Kumiai, Yuma, Seri, Chontal, Chinanteco, Pame, Chichimeca, Otomi, Mazahua, Matlatzinca, Ocuilteco, Zapoteco, Solteco, Chatino, Papabuco, Mixteco, Cuicateco, Triqui, Amuzgo, Mazateco, Chocho, Ixcateco, Huave, Tlapaneco, Totonaca, Tepehua, Popoluca, Mixe, Zoque, Huasteco, Lacandón, Mayo, Ch'ol, Tzeltal, Tzotzil, Tojolabal, Mame, Teco, Ixil, Aguacateco, Motocintleco, Chicomucelteco.

They want to take the land so that our feet have nothing to stand on. They want to take our history so that we and our word will be forgotten and die. They do not want Indians. They want us dead.

The powerful want our silence. When we were silent, we died. Without the word we did not exist. We fight against this loss of memory, against death, and for life. We fight the fear of a death because we have ceased to exist in memory.

When the homeland speaks its Indian heart, it will have dignity and memory.

• • •

Brothers and Sisters:

On January 1 of 1995, after breaking the military blockade with which the bad government pretended to submerge us in surrender and isolation, we called upon the different citizen forces to construct a broad opposition front which would unite those democratic voices which exist against the State-Party system: the Movement of National Liberation. Although the beginning of this effort at unity encountered many problems, it lives still in the thoughts of those men and women who reject conformity when they see their Homeland under the rule of the Powerful and foreign monies. This broad opposition front, after following a route filled with difficulty, regressions, and misunderstandings, is about to concretize its first proposals and agreements for coordinated action. The long process of maturity of this organizing effort will bear fruit this new year. We Zapatistas salute the birth of this Movement of National Liberation and we hope that, among those who form it there will always be a zeal for unity and respect for differences.

Once the dialogue with the supreme government began, the commitment of the EZLN to its search for a political solution to the war begun in 1994 was betrayed. Pretending to want to dialogue, the bad government opted for a cowardly military solution, and with stupid and clumsy arguments, unleashed a great military and police persecution which had as its supreme objective the assassination of the leadership of the EZLN. The armed rebel forces of the EZLN met this attack with serene resistance, tolerating the blows of thousands of soldiers assisted by the sophisticated death machinery and technical assistance of foreigners who wanted to end the cry for dignity which came out of the mountains of the Mexican Southeast. An order to retreat allowed the Zapatista forces to conserve their military power, their moral authority, and their political force and historic reason

which is the principal weapon against crime-made-government. The great mobilizations of national and international civil society stopped the treacherous offensive and forced the government to insist upon the path of dialogue and negotiation. Thousands of innocent civilians were taken prisoners by the bad government and still remain in jail, utilized as hostages of war by the terrorists who govern us. The federal forces had no other military victory than the destruction of a library, an auditorium for cultural events, a dance floor, and the pillage of the few belongings of the Indigenous people of the Lacandón jungle. This murderous attempt was covered up by the governmental lie of "recuperating national sovereignty."

Ignoring Article 39 of the Constitution, which it swore to uphold on December 1, 1994, the supreme government reduced the Mexican Federal Army to the role of an army of occupation. It gave it the task of salvaging the organized crime which has become government, and deployed it to attack its own Mexican brothers.

Meanwhile, the true loss of national sovereignty was concretized in the secret pacts and public economic cabinet with the owners of money and foreign governments. Today, as thousands of federal soldiers harass and provoke a people armed with wooden guns and the word of dignity, the high officials finish selling off the wealth of the great Mexican nation and destroy the little which was left.

Once it took up that dialogue for peace again, forced by the pressure of international and national civil society, the government delegation once again took the opportunity to demonstrate clearly its true motivation for the peace negotiations. The neo-conquerors of the Indigenous people headed by the negotiating team of the government have distinguished themselves by their prepotent attitude, their arrogance, their racism, and their constant humiliation which pursues failure after failure in the different sessions of the Dialogue of San Andrés. It bet upon the exhaustion and frustration of the Zapatistas, and the government dele-

gation placed all its energies on breaking the dialogue, confident that it would then have all the arguments in its favor for the use of armed force, securing what reason could not secure.

Once the EZLN understood that the government refused to concentrate seriously on the national conflict which the war represented, it took a peace initiative in an attempt to unravel the dialogue and negotiations. It called civil society to a national and international dialogue in its search for a new peace. It called for the PLEBISCITE FOR PEACE AND DEMOCRACY in order to hear national and international opinion about its demands and future.

With the enthusiastic participation of the members of the NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION, the disinterested volunteerism of thousands of disorganized citizens with democratic hopes, the mobilization of international solidarity groups and groups of young people, and the invaluable help of the brothers and sister of NATIONAL CIVIC ALLIANCE during the months of August and September of 1995, a civic and unprecedented experiment was carried out. Never before in the history of the world or the nation had a peaceful civil society dialogued with a clandestine and armed group. More than 1,300,000 dialogues were realized in order to verify this encounter with democratic wills. As a result of this plebiscite, the legitimacy of the Zapatista demands was ratified. A new push was given to the broad opposition front which had become stagnant and clearly expressed the will to see the Zapatistas participate in the civic political life of the country. The massive participation of international civil society called attention to the necessity to construct those spaces where the different aspirations for democratic change could find expression, even among the different countries. The EZLN considers the results of this national and international dialogue very serious and will now begin the political and organizational work necessary in order to comply with those messages.

Three new initiatives were launched by the Zapatistas as responses to the success of the PLEBISCITE FOR PEACE AND DEMOCRACY.

An initiative for the international arena expresses itself in a call to carry out an intercontinental dialogue in opposition to neoliberalism. The two other initiatives are of a national character: the formation of civic committees of dialogue whose base is the discussion of the major national problems and which are the seeds of a nonpartisan political force; and the construction of the new *Aguascalientes* as places for encounters between civil society and Zapatismo.

Three months after these three initiatives were launched, the call for the intercontinental dialogue for humanity and against neoliberalism is almost complete, more than two hundred civic committees of dialogue have been organized in all of the Mexican republic, and today, five new Aguascalientes will be inaugurated: one in the community of La Garrucha, another in Oventic, Morelia, La Realidad, and the first and last one in the hearts of all the honest men and women who live in the world. In the midst of threats and penuries, the Indigenous Zapatista communities and civil society have managed to raise these centers of civic and peaceful resistance which will be a gathering place for Mexican culture and cultures of the world.

The new National Dialogue had its first test under the rationale for Discussion Table Number One in San Andrés. While the government discovered its ignorance regarding the original inhabitants of these lands, the advisors and guests of the EZLN began such a new and rich dialogue that it overwhelmed the limitations of the Discussion Table in San Andrés and it had to be relocated to its rightful place: the nation. The Indigenous Mexicans, the ones always forced to listen, to obey, to accept, to resign themselves, took the word and spoke the wisdom which is in their walk. The image of the ignorant Indian, pusillanimous and ridiculous, the image which the Powerful had decreed for national consumption, was shattered, and the Indigenous pride and

dignity returned to history in order to take the place it deserves: that of complete and capable citizens.

Independently of what arises as a result of the first negotiation of the agreements of San Andrés, the dialogue begun by the different ethnic groups and their representatives will continue now within the INDIGENOUS NATIONAL FORUM, and it will have its rhythm and achievements which the Indigenous people themselves will agree upon and decide.

On the national political scene, the criminality of Salinismo was rediscovered and it destabilized the State-Party System. The apologists for Salinas, who reformed and altered the Constitution now have amnesia and are among the most enthusiastic persecutors of the man under whom they acquired their wealth. The National Action Party (PAN), the most faithful ally of Salinas de Gortari, began to demonstrate its real possibilities of replacing the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) in the summit of political power and demonstrate its repressive, intolerant and reactionary nature. Those who see hope in the rise of neo-PANism forget that a substitution in a dictatorship is not democracy. They applaud the new inquisition, which through a democratic façade, pretends to sanction with moralistic blows the last remains of a country which was once a world wonder and today provides the material for chronicles of police action and scandals. A constant presence within the exercise of government was repression and impunity; the massacres of Indigenous people in Guerrero, Oaxaca, and the Huasteca ratify government policy towards Indigenous peoples; the authoritarianism in the UNAM toward the movement of those students wishing to democratize the College of Sciences and Humanities is a manifestation of the corruption which seeps into academia from politics; the detention of the leaders of El Barzon is another manifestation of treachery as a method of dialogue; the bestial repression of the regent Espinoza rehearses street fascism in Mexico City; the reforms

to the Social Security law repeat the democratization of misery, and the support for the privatization of the banks secure the unity between the State-Party System and money. These political crimes have no solution because they are committed by those who are supposed to prosecute; the economic crisis makes corruption even more prevalent in government spheres. Government and crime are today synonymous and equivalent.

While the legal opposition dedicated itself to find the center in a dying nation, large sectors of the population increased their skepticism towards political parties and searched, without finding it still, for an option for new political work, a political organization of a new kind.

Like a star, the dignified and heroic resistance of the Indigenous Zapatista communities illuminated 1995 and wrote a beautiful lesson in Mexican history. In Tepoztlan, in the workers of SUTAUR-100, in El Barzon, just to mention a few places and movements, popular resistance found representatives with great dignity.

In summary, 1995 was characterized by the definition of two national projects completely different and contradictory.

On the one hand, the national project of the Powerful, a project which entails the total destruction of the Mexican nation; the negation of its history; the sale of its sovereignty; treachery and crime as supreme values; hypocrisy and deceit as a method of government; destabilization and insecurity as a national program; repression and intolerance as a plan for economic development. This project finds in the PRI its criminal face and in the PAN its pretense of democracy.

On the other hand, the project of a transition to democracy, not a transition within a corrupt system which simulates change in order for everything to remain the same, but the transition to democracy as a reconstruction project for the nation; the defense of national sovereignty; justice and hope as aspirations; truth and government through obedience as a guide for leadership; the stability and security given by

democracy and liberty; dialogue, tolerance, and inclusion as a new way of making politics. This project must still be created and it will correspond, not to a homogeneous political force or to the geniality of an individual, but to a broad opposition movement capable of gathering the sentiments of the nation.

We are in the midst of a great war which has shaken Mexico at the end of the twentieth century. The war between those who intend to perpetuate a social, cultural, and political regime which is the equivalent to the crime of treachery to the nation; and those who struggle for a democratic, just, and free change. The Zapatista war is only a part of that great war which is the struggle between a history which aspires to a future and an amnesia which has foreign vocation.

A plural, tolerant, inclusive, democratic, just, free, and new society is only possible today, in a new nation. The Powerful will not be the ones to construct it. The Powerful are only the salesmen of the remains of a destroyed country, one devastated by the true subversives and destabilizers: those who govern.

Those projects which belong to the new opposition lack something which today has become decisive. We are opposed to a national project which implies its destruction, but we lack a proposal for a new Nation, a proposal for reconstruction.

Part, but certainly not all its vanguard, has been and is the EZLN in its effort for a transition to democracy. In spite of the persecution and the threats, beyond the lies and deceits, the EZLN has remained legitimate and accountable and forges ahead in its struggle for democracy, liberty, and justice for all Mexicans.

Today, the struggle for democracy, liberty, and justice in Mexico is a struggle for national liberation.

II

Today, with the heart of Emiliano Zapata and having heard the voice of all our we call upon the people of Mexico to participate in a new stage of the struggle for national liberation and the construction of a new nation, through this FOURTH DECLARATION OF THE LACANDÓN JUNGLE in which we call upon all honest men and women to participate in the new national political force which is born today: the ZAPATISTA FRONT OF NATIONAL LIBERATION—a civic and peaceful organization, independent and democratic, Mexican and national, which will struggle for democracy, liberty, and justice in Mexico. The Zapatista Front of National Liberation is born today and we invite the participation of the workers of the Republic, the workers in the field and in the city, the Indigenous people, the squatters, the teachers and students, Mexican women, the youth in all the nation, honest artists and intellectuals, religious people who are accountable, all those Mexican citizens who do not seek Power but democracy, liberty, and justice for ourselves and for our children.

We invite national civic society, those without a party, the citizen and social movement, all Mexicans to construct this new political force.

A new political force that will be national. A new political force based in the EZLN.

A new political force that forms part of a broad opposition movement, the national liberation movement, as a space for citizen political action where there may be a confluence with other political forces of the independent opposition, a space where popular wills may encounter and coordinate united actions with one another.

A political force whose members do not exert nor aspire to hold elective positions or government offices at any of its levels. A political force which does not aspire to take power. A force which is not a political party.

A political force that can organize the demands and proposals of those citizens and is willing to give direction through obedience. A political force which can organize a solution to the collective problems without the intervention of political parties and of the government. We do not need permission in order to be free. The role of the government is the prerogative of society and it is its right to exert that function.

A political force that struggles against the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few and against the centralization of power. A political force whose members do not have any other privilege than the satisfaction of having fulfilled its commitment.

A political force with local, state, and regional organization that grows from the base, which is its social force. A political force given birth by the civic committees of dialogue.

A political force that is called a FRONT because it incorporates organizational efforts which are nonpartisan, and has many levels of participation and many forms of struggle.

A political force called ZAPATISTA because it is born with the hope and the Indigenous heart which, together with the EZLN, descended again from the Mexican mountains.

A political force with a program of struggle with thirteen points. Those contained in the First Declaration of the Lacandón Jungle and added throughout the past two years of insurgency. A political force which struggles against the State-Party System. A political force which struggles for a new constituency and a new constitution. A political force which does not struggle to take political power but for a democracy where those who govern, govern by obeying.

We call upon all those men and women of Mexico, the Indigenous and those who are not Indigenous, we call upon all the peoples who form this Nation; upon those who agree to struggle for housing, land, work, bread, health, education, information, culture, independence, democracy, justice, liberty, and peace; to those who understand

that the State-Party System is the main obstacle to a transition to democracy in Mexico; to those who know that democracy does not mean substituting those in absolute power but government of the people, for the people and by the people; for those who agree with the need to create a new Magna Carta which incorporates the principal demands of the Mexican people and the guarantees that Article 39 be complied with through plebiscites and referendums; to those who do not aspire or pretend to exercise public privileges or elected posts; to those who have the heart, the will, and the wisdom on the left side of their chest; to those who want to stop being spectators and are willing to go without pay or privilege other than participation in national reconstruction; to those who want to construct something new and good, to become a part of the ZAPATISTA FRONT OF NATIONAL LIBERATION.

Those citizens without a party, those social and political organizations, those civic committees of dialogue, movements and groups, all those who do not aspire to take Power and who subscribe to this FOURTH DECLARATION OF THE LACANDÓN JUNGLE commit themselves to participate in a dialogue to formulate its organic structure, its plan of action, and its declaration of principles for this ZAPATISTA FRONT OF NATIONAL LIBERATION.

Today, this January 1 of 1996, the Zapatista Army of National Liberation signs this FOURTH DECLARATION OF THE LACANDÓN JUNGLE. We invite all the people of Mexico to subscribe to it.

III

Brothers and Sisters:

Many words walk in the world. Many worlds are made. Many worlds are made for us. There are words and worlds which are lies and injustices. There are words and worlds which are truths and truthful. We make true words. We have been made from true words.

In the world of the powerful there is no space for anyone but themselves and their servants. In the world we want everyone fits.

In the world we want many worlds to fit. The Nation which we construct is one where all communities and languages fit, where all steps may walk, where all may have laughter, where all may live the dawn.

We speak of unity even when we are silent. Softly and gently we speak the words which find the unity which will embrace us in history and which will discard the abandonment which confronts and destroys.

Our word, our song and our cry, is so that the most dead will no longer die. So that we may live fighting, we may live singing.

Long live the word. Long live *Enough is Enough!* Long live the night which becomes a soldier in order not to die in oblivion. In order to live the word dies, its seed germinating forever in the womb of the earth. By being born and living we die. We will always live. Only those who give up their history are consigned to oblivion.

We are here. We do not surrender. Zapata is alive, and in spite of everything, the struggle continues.

From the mountains of the Mexican Southeast
Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos
Indigenous Clandestine Revolutionary Committee
General Command of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation
Mexico, January 1996

Jose Luis, untitled painting, no date. Courtesy of EDELO.

SIXTH DECLARATION OF THE LACANDÓN JUNGLE

THIS IS OUR SIMPLE WORD which seeks to touch the hearts of humble and simple people like ourselves, but people who are also, like ourselves, dignified and who rebel. This is our simple word for recounting what our path has been and where we are now, in order to explain how we see the world and our country, in order to say what we are thinking of doing and how we are thinking of doing it, and in order to invite other persons to walk with us in something very great which is called Mexico and something greater which is called the world. This is our simple word in order to inform all honest and noble hearts what it is we want in Mexico and the world. This is our simple word, because it is our idea to call on those who are like us and to join together with them, everywhere they are living and struggling.

I—WHAT WE ARE

We are the Zapatistas of the EZLN, although we are also called "neo-Zapatistas." Now, we, the Zapatistas of the EZLN, rose up in arms in January of 1994 because we saw how widespread had become the evil wrought by the powerful who only humiliated us, stole from

us, imprisoned us, and killed us, and no one was saying anything or doing anything. That is why we said "Ya Basta!," that no longer were we going to allow them to make us inferior or treat us worse than animals. And then we also said we wanted democracy, liberty and justice for all Mexicans although we were concentrated on the Indian peoples. Because it so happened that we, the EZLN, were almost all only Indigenous from here in Chiapas, but we did not want to struggle just for our own good, or just for the good of the Indigenous of Chiapas, or just for the good of the Indian peoples of Mexico. We wanted to fight along with everyone who was humble and simple like ourselves and who was in great need and who suffered from exploitation and thievery by the rich and their bad governments here, in our Mexico, and in other countries in the world.

And then our small history was that we grew tired of exploitation by the powerful, and then we organized in order to defend ourselves and to fight for justice. In the beginning there were not many of us, just a few, going this way and that, talking with and listening to other people like us. We did that for many years, and we did it in secret, without making a stir. In other words, we joined forces in silence. We remained like that for about ten years, and then we grew, and then we were many thousands. We trained ourselves quite well in politics and weapons, and, suddenly, when the rich were throwing their New Year's Eve parties, we fell upon their cities and just took them over. And we left a message to everyone that here we are, that they have to take notice of us. And then the rich took off and sent their great armies to do away with us, just like they always do when the exploited rebel—they order them all to be done away with. But we were not done away with at all, because we had prepared ourselves quite well prior to the war, and we made ourselves strong in our mountains. And there were the armies, looking for us and throwing their bombs and bullets at us, and then they were making plans to kill off all the Indigenous at one time, because they did

not know who was a Zapatista and who was not. And we were running and fighting, fighting and running, just like our ancestors had done. Without giving up, without surrendering, without being defeated.

And then the people from the cities went out into the streets and began shouting for an end to the war. And then we stopped our war, and we listened to those brothers and sisters from the city who were telling us to try to reach an arrangement or an accord with the bad governments, so that the problem could be resolved without a massacre. And so we paid attention to them, because they were what we call "the people," or the Mexican people. And so we set aside the fire and took up the word.

And it so happened that the governments said they would indeed be well-behaved, and they would engage in dialogue, and they would make accords, and they would fulfill them. And we said that was good, but we also thought it was good that we knew those people who went out into the streets in order to stop the war. Then, while we were engaging in dialogue with the bad governments, we were also talking with those persons, and we saw that most of them were humble and simple people like us, and both, they and we, understood quite well why we were fighting. And we called those people 'civil society' because most of them did not belong to political parties; rather they were common, everyday people, like us, simple and humble people.

But it so happened that the bad governments did not want a good agreement. Rather it was just their underhanded way of saying they were going to talk and to reach accords, while they were preparing their attacks in order to eliminate us once and for all. And so then they attacked us several times, but they did not defeat us, because we resisted quite well, and many people throughout the world mobilized. And then the bad governments thought that the problem was that many people saw what was happening with the EZLN, and they started their plan of acting as if nothing was going on. Meanwhile they were quick

to surround us, they laid siege to us in hopes that, since our mountains are indeed remote, the people would then forget, since Zapatista lands were so far away. And every so often the bad governments tested us and tried to deceive us or to attack us, like in February 1995 when they threw a huge number of armies at us, but they did not defeat us. Because, as we said then, we were not alone, and many people helped us, and we resisted well.

And then the bad governments had to make accords with the EZLN, and those accords were called the 'San Andrés Accords' because the municipality where those accords were signed was called San Andrés. And we were not all alone in those dialogues, speaking with people from the bad governments. We invited many people and organizations who were, or are, engaged in the struggle for the Indian peoples of Mexico, and everyone spoke their word, and everyone reached agreement as to how we were going to speak with the bad governments. And that is how that dialogue was, not just the Zapatistas on one side and the governments on the other. Instead, the Indian peoples of Mexico, and those who supported them, were with the Zapatistas. And then the bad governments said in those accords that they were indeed going to recognize the rights of the Indian peoples of Mexico, and they were going to respect their culture, and they were going to make everything law in the Constitution. But then, once they had signed, the bad governments acted as if they had forgotten about them, and many years passed, and the accords were not fulfilled at all. Quite the opposite, the government attacked the Indigenous, in order to make them back out of the struggle, as they did on December 22, 1997, the date on which Zedillo ordered the killing of forty-five men, women, old ones and children, in the town in Chiapas called Acteal. This immense crime was not so easily forgotten, and it was a demonstration of how the bad governments color their hearts in order to attack and assassinate those who rebel against injustices. And, while all of that was going on, we

Zapatistas were putting our all into the fulfillment of the accords and resisting in the mountains of the Mexican Southeast.

And then we began speaking with other Indian peoples of Mexico and their organizations, and we made an agreement with them that we were going to struggle together for the same thing, for the recognition of Indigenous rights and culture. Now we were also being helped by many people from all over the world and by persons who were well respected and whose word was quite great because they were great intellectuals, artists, and scientists from Mexico and from all over the world. And we also held international encuentros. In other words, we joined together to talk with persons from America and from Asia and from Europe and from Africa and from Oceania, and we learned of their struggles and their ways, and we said they were "intergalactic" encuentros, just to be silly and because we had also invited those from other planets, but it appeared as if they did not come, or perhaps they did, but they did not make it clear.

But the bad governments did not keep their word anyway, and then we made a plan to talk with many Mexicans so they would help us. And then, first in 1997, we held a march to Mexico City which was called "of the 1,111" because a *compañero* or *compañera* was going to go from each Zapatista town, but the bad government did not pay any attention. And then, in 1999, we held a *consulta* throughout the country, and there it was seen that the majority were indeed in agreement with the demands of the Indian peoples, but again the bad governments did not pay any attention. And then lastly, in 2001, we held what was called the "March for Indigenous Dignity" which had much support from millions of Mexicans and people from other countries, and it went to where the deputies and senators were, the Congress of the Union, in order to demand the recognition of the Mexican Indigenous.

But it happened that no, the politicians from the PRI, the PAN, and the PRD reached an agreement among themselves, and they sim-

ply did not recognize Indigenous rights and culture. That was in April of 2001, and the politicians demonstrated quite clearly there that they had no decency whatsoever, and they were swine who thought only about making their good money as the bad politicians they were. This must be remembered, because you will now be seeing that they are going to say they will indeed recognize Indigenous rights, but it is a lie they are telling so we will vote for them. But they already had their chance, and they did not keep their word.

And then we saw quite clearly that there was no point to dialogue and negotiate with the bad governments of Mexico, that it was a waste of time for us to be talking with the politicians, because neither their hearts nor their words were honest. They were crooked, and they told lies that they would keep their word, but they did not. In other words, on that day, when the politicians from the PRI, PAN, and PRD approved a law that was no good, they killed dialogue once and for all, and they clearly stated that it did not matter what they had agreed to and signed, because they did not keep their word. And then we did not make any contacts with the federal branches. Because we understood that dialogue and negotiation had failed as a result of those political parties. We saw that blood did not matter to them, nor did death, suffering, mobilizations, consultas, efforts, national and international statements, encuentros, accords, signatures, commitments. And so the political class not only closed, one more time, the door to the Indian peoples, they also delivered a mortal blow to the peaceful resolution—through dialogue and negotiation—of the war. It can also no longer be believed that the accords will be fulfilled by someone who comes along with something or other. They should see that there so that they can learn from experience what happened to us.

And then we saw all of that, and we wondered in our hearts what we were going to do.

And the first thing we saw was that our heart was not the same as before, when we began our struggle. It was larger, because now we had touched the hearts of many good people. And we also saw that our heart was more hurt, it was more wounded. And it was not wounded by the deceits of the bad governments, but because, when we touched the hearts of others, we also touched their sorrows. It was as if we were seeing ourselves in a mirror.

II—WHERE WE ARE NOW

Then, like the Zapatistas we are, we thought that it was not enough to stop engaging in dialogue with the government, but it was necessary to continue on ahead in the struggle, in spite of those lazy parasites of politicians. The EZLN then decided to carry out, alone and on their side ('unilateral,' in other words), the San Andrés Accords regarding Indigenous rights and culture. For four years, from 2001 to 2005, we have devoted ourselves to this and to other things which we are going to tell you about.

Fine, we then began encouraging the autonomous rebel Zapatista municipalities—which is how the peoples are organized in order to govern and to govern themselves—in order to make themselves stronger. This method of autonomous government was not simply invented by the EZLN, but rather it comes from several centuries of Indigenous resistance and from the Zapatistas' own experience. It is the self-governance of the communities. In other words, no one from outside comes to govern, but the peoples themselves decide, among themselves, who governs and how, and, if they do not obey, they are removed. If the one who governs does not obey the people, they pursue them, they are removed from authority, and another comes in.

But then we saw that the Autonomous Municipalities were not level. There were some that were more advanced and which had more

support from civil society, and others were more neglected. The organization was lacking to make them more on par with each other. And we also saw that the EZLN, with its political-military component, was involving itself in decisions which belonged to the democratic authorities, 'civilians,' as they say. And here the problem is that the political-military component of the EZLN is not democratic, because it is an army. And we saw that the military being above, and the democratic below, was not good, because what is democratic should not be decided militarily, it should be the reverse: the democratic-political governing above, and the military obeying below. Or, perhaps, it would be better with nothing below, just completely level, without any military, and that is why the Zapatistas are soldiers so that there will not be any soldiers. Fine, what we then did about this problem was to begin separating the political-military from the autonomous and democratic aspects of organization in the Zapatista communities. And so, actions and decisions which had previously been made and taken by the EZLN were being passed, little by little, to the democratically elected authorities in the villages. It is easy to say, of course, but it was very difficult in practice, because many years have passed—first in the preparation for the war and then the war itself—and the political-military aspects have become customary. But, regardless, we did so because it is our way to do what we say, because if not, why should we go around saying things if we do not then do them?

That was how the Good Government Juntas were born, in August of 2003, and, through them, self-learning and the exercise of "govern obeying" has continued.

From that time and until the middle of 2005, the EZLN leadership has no longer involved itself in giving orders in civil matters, but it has accompanied and helped the authorities who are democratically elected by the peoples. It has also kept watch so that the peoples and national and international civil society are kept well informed concern-

ing the aid that is received and how it is used. And now we are passing the work of safeguarding good government to the Zapatista support bases, with temporary positions which are rotated, so that everyone learns and carries out this work because we believe that a people which does not watch over its leaders is condemned to be enslaved, and we fought to be free, not to change masters every six years.

The EZLN, during these four years, also handed over to the Good Government Juntas and the Autonomous Municipalities the aid and contacts which they had attained throughout Mexico and the world during these years of war and resistance. The EZLN had also, during that time, been building economic and political support which allowed the Zapatista communities to make progress with fewer difficulties in the building of their autonomy and in improving their living conditions. It is not much, but it is far better than what they had prior to the beginning of the uprising in January of 1994. If you look at one of those studies the governments make, you will see that the only Indigenous communities which have improved their living conditions—whether in health, education, food or housing—were those which are in Zapatista territory, which is what we call where our villages are. And all of that has been possible because of the progress made by the Zapatista villages and because of the very large support which has been received from good and noble persons, whom we call "civil societies," and from their organizations throughout the world. As if all of these people have made "another world is possible" a reality, but through actions, not just words.

And the villages have made good progress. Now there are more compañeros and compañeras who are learning to govern. And—even though little by little—there are more women going into this work, but there is still a lack of respect for the compañeras, and they need to participate more in the work of the struggle. And, also through the Good Government Juntas, coordination has been improved between

the Autonomous Municipalities and the resolution of problems with other organizations and with the official authorities. There has also been much improvement in the projects in the communities, and the distribution of projects and aid given by civil society from all over the world has become more level. Health and education have improved, although there is still a good deal lacking for it to be what it should be. The same is true for housing and food, and in some areas there has been much improvement with the problem of land, because the lands recovered from the finqueros are being distributed. But there are areas which continue to suffer from a lack of lands to cultivate. And there has been great improvement in the support from national and international civil society, because previously everyone went wherever they wanted, and now the Good Government Juntas are directing them to where the greatest need exists. And, similarly, everywhere there are more compañeros and compañeras who are learning to relate to persons from other parts of Mexico and of the world. They are learning to respect and to demand respect. They are learning that there are many worlds, and that everyone has their place, their time and their way, and therefore there must be mutual respect between everyone.

We, the Zapatistas of the EZLN, have devoted this time to our primary force, to the peoples who support us. And the situation has indeed improved some. No one can say that the Zapatista organization and struggle has been without point, but rather, even if they were to do away with us completely, our struggle has indeed been of some use.

But it is not just the Zapatista villages which have grown—the EZLN has also grown. Because what has happened during this time is that new generations have renewed our entire organization. They have added new strength. The comandantes and comandantas who were in their maturity at the beginning of the uprising in 1994 now have the wisdom they gained in the war and in the twelve years of dialogue with thousands of men and women from throughout the world. The

members of the CCRI, the Zapatista political-organizational leadership, is now counseling and directing the new ones who are entering our struggle, as well as those who are holding leadership positions. For some time now the "committees" (which is what we call them) have been preparing an entire new generation of *comandantes* and *comandantas* who, following a period of instruction and testing, are beginning to learn the work of organizational leadership and to discharge their duties. And it also happens that our insurgents, *insurgentas*, militants, local and regional *responsables*, as well as support bases, who were youngsters at the beginning of the uprising, are now mature men and women, combat veterans and natural leaders in their units and communities. And those who were children in that January of 1994 are now young people who have grown up in the resistance, and they have been trained in the rebel dignity lifted up by their elders throughout these twelve years of war. These young people have a political, technical, and cultural training that we who began the Zapatista movement did not have. This youth is now, more and more, sustaining our troops as well as leadership positions in the organization. And, indeed, all of us have seen the deceits by the Mexican political class and the destruction which their actions have caused in our patria. And we have seen the great injustices and massacres that neoliberal globalization causes throughout the world. But we will speak to you of that later.

And so the EZLN has resisted twelve years of war, of military, political, ideological, and economic attacks, of siege, of harassment, of persecution, and they have not vanquished us. We have not sold out nor surrendered, and we have made progress. More compañeros from many places have entered into the struggle so that, instead of making us weaker after so many years, we have become stronger. Of course there are problems which can be resolved by more separation of the political-military from the civil-democratic. But there are things,

the most important ones, such as our demands for which we struggle, which have not been fully achieved.

To our way of thinking, and what we see in our heart, we have reached a point where we cannot go any further, and, in addition, it is possible that we could lose everything we have if we remain as we are and do nothing more in order to move forward. The hour has come to take a risk once again and to take a step which is dangerous but worthwhile. Because, perhaps united with other social sectors who suffer from the same wants as we do, it will be possible to achieve what we need and what we deserve. A new step forward in the Indigenous struggle is only possible if the Indigenous join together with workers, campesinos, students, teachers, employees—the workers of the city and the countryside.

III—HOW WE SEE THE WORLD

Now we are going to explain to you how we, the Zapatistas, see what is going on in the world. We see that capitalism is the strongest right now. Capitalism is a social system, a way in which a society goes about organizing things and people, and who has and who has not, and who gives orders and who obeys. In capitalism, there are some people who have money, or capital, and factories and stores and fields and many things, and there are others who have nothing but their strength and knowledge in order to work. In capitalism, those who have money and things give the orders, and those who only have their ability to work obey.

Then capitalism means that there are few who have great wealth, but they did not win a prize, or find a treasure, or inherit from a parent. They obtained that wealth, rather, by exploiting the work of the many. So capitalism is based on the exploitation of the workers, which means they exploit the workers and take out all the profits they can. This is done unjustly, because they do not pay the worker what his work is worth. Instead they give him a salary that barely allows him to eat a

little and to rest for a bit, and the next day he goes back to work in exploitation, whether in the countryside or in the city.

And capitalism also makes its wealth from plunder, or theft, because they take what they want from others, land, for example, and natural resources. So capitalism is a system where the robbers are free and they are admired and used as examples.

And, in addition to exploiting and plundering, capitalism represses because it imprisons and kills those who rebel against injustice.

Capitalism is most interested in merchandise, because when it is bought or sold, profits are made. And then capitalism turns everything into merchandise, it makes merchandise of people, of nature, of culture, of history, of conscience. According to capitalism, everything must be able to be bought and sold. And it hides everything behind the merchandise, so we don't see the exploitation that exists. And then the merchandise is bought and sold in a market. And the market, in addition to being used for buying and selling, is also used to hide the exploitation of the workers. In the market, for example, we see coffee in its little package or its pretty little jar, but we do not see the campesino who suffered in order to harvest the coffee, and we do not see the coyote who paid him so cheaply for his work, and we do not see the workers in the large company working their hearts out to package the coffee. Or we see an appliance for listening to music like *cumbias*, *rancheras*, or *corridos*, or whatever, and we see that it is very good because it has a good sound, but we do not see the worker in the *maquiladora* who struggled for many hours, putting the cables and the parts of the appliance together, and they barely paid her a pittance of money, and she lives far away from work and spends a lot on the trip, and, in addition, she runs the risk of being kidnapped, raped, and killed as happens in Ciudad Juárez in Mexico.

So we see merchandise in the market, but we do not see the exploitation with which it was made. And then capitalism needs many markets . . . or a very large market, a world market.

And so the capitalism of today is not the same as before, when the rich were content with exploiting the workers in their own countries, but now they are on a path which is called Neoliberal Globalization. This globalization means that they no longer control the workers in one or several countries, but the capitalists are trying to dominate everything all over the world. And the world, or Planet Earth, is also called the "globe," and that is why they say "globalization," or the entire world.

And neoliberalism is the idea that capitalism is free to dominate the entire world, and so tough, you have to resign yourself and conform and not make a fuss, in other words, not rebel. So neoliberalism is like the theory, the plan, of capitalist globalization. And neoliberalism has its economic, political, military, and cultural plans. All of those plans have to do with dominating everyone, and they repress or separate anyone who doesn't obey so that his rebellious ideas aren't passed on to others.

Then, in neoliberal globalization, the great capitalists who live in the countries which are powerful, like the United States, want the entire world to be made into a big business where merchandise is produced like a great market—a world market for buying and selling the entire world and for hiding all the exploitation from the world. Then the global capitalists insert themselves everywhere, in all the countries, in order to do their big business, their great exploitation. Then they respect nothing, and they meddle wherever they wish, as if they were conquering other countries. That is why we Zapatistas say that neoliberal globalization is a war of conquest of the entire world, a world war, a war being waged by capitalism for global domination. Sometimes that conquest is by armies who invade a country and conquer it by force. But sometimes it is with the economy, in other words, the big capitalists put their money into another country

or they lend it money, but on the condition that they obey what they tell them to do. And they also insert their ideas, with the capitalist culture which is the culture of merchandise, of profits, of the market.

Then the one which wages the conquest, capitalism, does as it wants; it destroys and changes what it does not like and eliminates what gets in its way. For example, those who do not produce nor buy nor sell modern merchandise get in their way, or those who rebel against that order. And they despise those who are of no use to them. That is why the Indigenous get in the way of neoliberal capitalism, and that is why they despise them and want to eliminate them. And neoliberal capitalism also gets rid of the laws which do not allow them to exploit and to have a lot of profit. They demand that everything can be bought and sold, and, since capitalism has all the money, it buys everything. Capitalism destroys the countries it conquers with neoliberal globalization, but it also wants to adapt everything, to make it over again, but in its own way, a way which benefits capitalism and which doesn't allow anything to get in its way. Then neoliberal globalization, capitalism, destroys what exists in these countries; it destroys their culture, their language, their economic system, their political system, and it also destroys the ways in which those who live in that country relate to each other. So everything that makes a country a country is left destroyed.

Then neoliberal globalization wants to destroy the nations of the world so that only one Nation or country remains, the country of money, of capital. And capitalism wants everything to be as it wants, in its own way, and it doesn't like what is different, and it persecutes it and attacks it, or puts it off in a corner and acts as if it doesn't exist.

Then, in short, the capitalism of global neoliberalism is based on exploitation, plunder, contempt, and repression of those who refuse. The same as before, but now globalized, worldwide.

But it is not so easy for neoliberal globalization, because the exploited of each country become discontented, and they will not say 'well, too

bad,' and instead they rebel. And those who remain and who are in the way resist, and they don't allow themselves to be eliminated. And that is why we see, all over the world, those who are being screwed over making resistances, not putting up with it; in other words, they rebel, and not just in one country but wherever they abound. And so, as there is a neoliberal globalization, there is a globalization of rebellion.

And it is not just the workers of the countryside and of the city who appear in this globalization of rebellion, but others also appear who are much persecuted and despised for the same reason, for not letting themselves be dominated, like women, young people, the Indigenous, homosexuals, lesbians, transsexual persons, migrants, and many other groups who exist all over the world but who we do not see until they shout "Ya Basta!" of being despised, and they rise up, and then we see them, we hear them, and we learn from them.

And then we see that all those groups of people are fighting against neoliberalism, against the capitalist globalization plan, and they are struggling for humanity.

And we are astonished when we see the stupidity of the neoliberals who want to destroy all humanity with their wars and exploitation, but it also makes us quite happy to see resistances and rebellions appearing everywhere, such as ours, which is a bit small, but here we are. And we see this all over the world, and now our heart learns that we are not alone.

IV—HOW WE SEE OUR COUNTRY WHICH IS MEXICO

Now we will talk to you about how we see what is going on in our Mexico. What we see is our country being governed by neoliberals. So, as we already explained, our leaders are destroying our nation, our Mexican Patria. And the work of these bad leaders is not to look after the well-being of the people; instead they are only concerned with

the well-being of the capitalists. For example, they make laws like the Free Trade Agreement, which end up leaving many Mexicans destitute, like campesinos and small producers, because they are "gobbled up" by the big agro-industrial companies. It's the same with workers and small businesspeople, because they cannot compete with the large transnationals who come in without anybody saying anything to them and even thanking them, and they set their low salaries and their high prices. So some of the economic foundations of our Mexico, which were the countryside and industry and national commerce, are being quite destroyed, and just a bit of rubble—which they are certainly going to sell off—remains.

And these are great disgraces for our Patria. Because food is no longer being produced in our countryside, just what the big capitalists sell, and the good lands are being stolen through trickery and with the help of the politicians. What is happening in the countryside is the same as *Porfirismo*, but, instead of *hacendados*, now there are a few foreign businesses which have well and truly screwed the campesino. And, where before there were credits and price protections, now there is just charity . . . and sometimes not even that.

As for the worker in the city, the factories close, and they are left without work, or they open what are called *maquiladoras*, which are foreign and which pay a pittance for many hours of work. And then the price of the goods the people need doesn't matter, whether they are expensive or cheap, since there is no money. And if someone was working in a small or midsize business, now they are not, because it was closed, and it was bought by a big transnational. And if someone had a small business, it disappeared as well, or they went to work clandestinely for big businesses which exploit them terribly, and which even put boys and girls to work. And if the worker belonged to his union in order to demand his legal rights, then no, now the same union tells him he will have to put up with his salary being lowered or his hours

or his benefits being taken away, because, if not, the business will close and move to another country. And then there is the "*microchangarro*," which is the government's economic program for putting all the city's workers on street corners selling gum or telephone cards. In other words, absolute economic destruction in the cities as well.

And then what happens is that, with the people's economy being totally screwed in the countryside as well as in the city, then many Mexican men and women have to leave their Patria, Mexican lands, and go to seek work in another country, the United States. And they do not treat them well there; instead they exploit them, persecute them, treat them with contempt, and even kill them. Under neoliberalism, which is being imposed by the bad governments, the economy has not improved. Quite the opposite, the countryside is in great need, and there is no work in the cities. What is happening is that Mexico is being turned into a place where people are working for the wealth of foreigners, mostly rich gringos, a place you are just born into for a little while, and in another little while you die. That is why we say that Mexico is dominated by the United States.

Now, it is not just that. Neoliberalism has also changed the Mexican political class, the politicians, because they made them into something like employees in a store, who have to do everything possible to sell everything and to sell it very cheap. You have already seen that they changed the laws in order to remove Article 27 from the Constitution so that *ejidal* and communal lands could be sold. That was Salinas de Gortari, and he and his gangs said that it was for the good of the countryside and the campesino, and that was how they would prosper and live better. Has it been like that? The Mexican countryside is worse than ever and the campesinos more screwed than under Porfirio Diaz. And they also say they are going to privatize—sell to foreigners—the companies held by the State to help the well-being of the people. Because the companies don't work well and they need to be modern-

ized, and it would be better to sell them. But, instead of improving, the social rights which were won in the Revolution of 1910 now make one sad . . . and courageous. And they also said that the borders must be opened so all the foreign capital can enter, that way all the Mexican businesses will be fixed, and things will be made better. But now we see that there are not any national businesses, the foreigners gobbled them all up, and the things that are sold are worse than those that were made in Mexico.

And now the Mexican politicians also want to sell PEMEX, the oil which belongs to all Mexicans, and the only difference is that some say everything should be sold and others that only a part of it should be sold. And they also want to privatize social security, and electricity and water and the forests and everything, until nothing of Mexico is left, and our country will be a wasteland or a place of entertainment for rich people from all over the world, and we Mexican men and women will be their servants, dependent on what they offer, bad housing, without roots, without culture, without even a Patria.

So the neoliberals want to kill Mexico, our Mexican Patria. And the political parties not only do not defend it, they are the first to put themselves at the service of foreigners, especially those from the United States, and they are the ones who are in charge of deceiving us, making us look the other way while everything is sold, and they are left with the money. All the political parties that exist right now, not just some of them. Think about whether anything has been done well, and you will see that no, nothing but theft and scams. And look how all the politicians always have their nice houses and their nice cars and luxuries. And they still want us to thank them and to vote for them again. And it is obvious, as they say, that they are without shame. And they are without it because they do not, in fact, have a Patria, they only have bank accounts.

And we also see that drug trafficking and crime has been increasing. And sometimes we think that criminals are like they show them in the songs or movies, and maybe some are like that, but not the real chiefs. The real chiefs go around very well dressed, they study outside the country, they are elegant, they do not go around in hiding, they eat in good restaurants and they appear in the papers, very pretty and well dressed at their parties. They are, as they say, 'good people,' and some are even officials, deputies, senators, secretaries of state, prosperous businessmen, police chiefs, generals.

Are we saying that politics serves no purpose? No, what we mean is that THAT politics serves no purpose. And it is useless because it does not take the people into account. It does not listen to them, it does not pay any attention to them, it just approaches them when there are elections. And they do not even want votes anymore, the polls are enough to say who wins. And then just promises about what this one is going to do and what the other one is going to do, then it's bye, I'll see you, but you don't see them again, except when they appear in the news when they've just stolen a lot of money and nothing is going to be done to them because the law—which those same politicians made—protects them.

Because that's another problem: the Constitution is all warped and changed now. It's no longer the one that had the rights and liberties of working people. Now there are the rights and liberties of the neoliberals so they can have their huge profits. And the judges exist to serve those neoliberals, because they always rule in favor of them, and those who are not rich get injustice, jails and cemeteries.

Well, even with all this mess the neoliberals are making, there are Mexican men and women who are organizing and making a resistance struggle.

And so we found out that there are Indigenous people, that their lands are far away from us here in Chiapas, and they are making their

autonomy and defending their culture and caring for their land, forests and water.

And there are workers in the countryside, campesinos, who are organizing and holding their marches and mobilizations in order to demand credits and aid for the countryside.

And there are workers in the city who do not let their rights be taken away or their jobs privatized. They protest and demonstrate so the little they have isn't taken away from them and so they don't take away from the country what is, in fact, its own, like electricity, oil, social security, education.

And there are students who don't let education be privatized and who are fighting for it to be free and popular and scientific, so they don't charge, so everyone can learn, and so they don't teach stupid things in schools.

And there are women who do not let themselves be treated as an ornament or be humiliated and despised just for being women, but who are organizing and fighting for the respect they deserve as the women they are.

And there are young people who don't accept being stultified with drugs or persecuted for their way of being, but who make themselves aware with their music and their culture, their rebellion.

And there are homosexuals, lesbians, transsexuals and many others who do not put up with being ridiculed, despised, mistreated, and even killed for having another way which is different, with being treated like they are abnormal or criminals, but who make their own organizations in order to defend their right to be different.

And there are priests and nuns and those they call laypeople who are not with the rich and who are not resigned, but who are organizing to accompany the struggles of the people.

And there are those who are called social activists, who are men and women who have been fighting all their lives for exploited peo-

ple, and they are the same ones who participated in the great strikes and workers' actions, in the great citizens' mobilizations, in the great campesino movements, and who suffer great repression, and who, even though some are old now, continue on without surrendering, and they go everywhere, looking for the struggle, seeking justice, and making leftist organizations, nongovernmental organizations, human rights organizations, organizations in defense of political prisoners and for the disappeared, leftist publications, organizations of teachers or students, social struggle, and even political-military organizations, and they are just not quiet and they know a lot because they have seen a lot and lived and struggled.

And so we see in general that in our country, which is called Mexico, there are many people who do not put up with things, who do not surrender, who do not sell out. Who are dignified. And that makes us very pleased and happy, because with all those people it's not going to be so easy for the neoliberals to win, and perhaps it will be possible to save our Patria from the great thefts and destruction they are doing. And we think that perhaps our "we" will include all those rebellions . . . .

V—WHAT WE WANT TO DO

We are now going to tell you what we want to do in the world and in Mexico, because we cannot watch everything that is happening on our planet and just remain quiet, as if only we were where we are.

What we want in the world is to tell all of those who are resisting and fighting in their own ways and in their own countries, that you are not alone, that we, the Zapatistas, even though we are very small, are supporting you, and we are going to look at how to help you in your struggles and to speak to you in order to learn, because what we have, in fact, learned is to learn.

And we want to tell the Latin American peoples that we are proud to be a part of you, even if it is a small part. We remember quite well how the continent was also illuminated some years ago, and a light was called Che Guevara, as it had previously been called Bolivar, because sometimes the people take up a name in order to say they are taking up a flag.

And we want to tell the people of Cuba, who have now been on their path of resistance for many years, that you are not alone, and we do not agree with the blockade they are imposing, and we are going to see how to send you something, even if it is maize, for your resistance. And we want to tell the North American people that we know that the bad governments which you have and which spread harm throughout the world is one thing—and those North Americans who struggle in their country, and who are in solidarity with the struggles of other countries, are a very different thing. And we want to tell the Mapuche brothers and sisters in Chile that we are watching and learning from your struggles. And to the Venezuelans, we see how well you are defending your sovereignty, your nation's right to decide where it is going. And to the Indigenous brothers and sisters of Ecuador and Bolivia, we say you are giving a good lesson in history to all of Latin America, because now you are indeed putting a halt to neoliberal globalization. And to the *piqueteros* and to the young people of Argentina, we want to tell you that we love you. And to those in Uruguay who want a better country, we admire you. And to those who are in Sin Tierra in Brazil, that we respect you. And to all the young people of Latin America, that what you are doing is good, and you give us great hope.

And we want to tell the brothers and sisters of Social Europe, that which is dignified and rebel, that you are not alone. That your great movements against the neoliberal wars bring us joy. That we are attentively watching your forms of organization and your methods of struggle so that we can perhaps learn something. That we are consid-

ering how we can help you in your struggles, and we are not going to send euros because then they will be devalued because of the European Union mess. But perhaps we will send you crafts and coffee so you can market them and help you some in the tasks of your struggle. And perhaps we might also send you some *pozol*, which gives much strength in the resistance, but who knows if we will send it to you, because pozol is more our way, and what if it were to hurt your bellies and weaken your struggles and the neoliberals defeat you.

And we want to tell the brothers and sisters of Africa, Asia and Oceania that we know that you are fighting also, and we want to learn more of your ideas and practices.

And we want to tell the world that we want to make you large, so large that all those worlds will fit, those worlds which are resisting because they want to destroy the neoliberals and because they simply cannot stop fighting for humanity.

Now then, what we want to do in Mexico is to make an agreement with persons and organizations only of the left, because we believe that it is in the political left where the idea of resisting neoliberal globalization is, and of making a country where there will be justice, democracy and liberty for everyone. Not as it is right now, where there is justice only for the rich, there is liberty only for their big businesses, and there is democracy only for painting walls with election propaganda. And because we believe that it is only from the left that a plan of struggle can emerge, so that our Patria, which is Mexico, does not die.

And, then, what we think is that, with these persons and organizations of the left, we will make a plan for going to all those parts of Mexico where there are humble and simple people like ourselves.

And we are not going to tell them what they should do or give them orders.

Nor are we going to ask them to vote for a candidate, since we already know that the ones who exist are neoliberals.

Nor are we going to tell them to be like us, nor to rise up in arms.

What we are going to do is to ask them what their lives are like, their struggle, their thoughts about our country and what we should do so they do not defeat us.

What we are going to do is to take heed of the thoughts of the simple and humble people, and perhaps we will find there the same love which we feel for our Patria.

And perhaps we will find agreement between those of us who are simple and humble and together we will organize all over the country and reach agreement in our struggles, which are alone right now, separated from each other, and we will find something like a program that has what we all want, and a plan for how we are going to achieve the realization of that program, which is called the "national program of struggle."

And, with the agreement of the majority of those people whom we are going to listen to, we will then engage in a struggle with everyone, with Indigenous, workers, campesinos, students, teachers, employees, women, children, old ones, men, and with all of those of good heart and who want to struggle so that our Patria called Mexico does not end up being destroyed and sold, and which still exists between the Rio Grande and the Rio Suchiate and which has the Pacific Ocean on one side and the Atlantic on the other.

VI—HOW WE ARE GOING TO DO IT

And so this is our simple word that goes out to the humble and simple people of Mexico and of the world, and we are calling our word of today:

Sixth Declaration of the Lacandón Jungle

And we are here to say, with our simple word, that. . .

The EZLN maintains its commitment to an offensive ceasefire, and it will not make any attack against government forces or any offensive military movements.

The EZLN still maintains its commitment to insisting on the path of political struggle through this peaceful initiative which we are now undertaking. The EZLN continues, therefore, in its resolve to not establish any kind of secret relations with either national political-military organizations or those from other countries.

The EZLN reaffirms its commitment to defend, support and obey the Zapatista Indigenous communities of which it is composed, and which are its supreme command, and—without interfering in their internal democratic processes—will, to the best of its abilities, contribute to the strengthening of their autonomy, good government, and improvement in their living conditions. In other words, what we are going to do in Mexico and in the world, we are going to do without arms, with a civil and peaceful movement, and without neglecting nor ceasing to support our communities.

Therefore. . .

In the World. . .

1. We will forge new relationships of mutual respect and support with persons and organizations who are resisting and struggling against neoliberalism and for humanity.

2. As far as we are able, we will send material aid such as food and handicrafts for those brothers and sisters who are struggling all over the world.

In order to begin, we are going to ask the Good Government Junta of La Realidad to loan their truck, which is called 'Chompiras,' and

which appears to hold eight tons, and we are going to fill it with maize and perhaps two two-hundred liter cans with oil or petrol, as they prefer, and we are going to deliver it to the Cuban Embassy in Mexico for them to send to the Cuban people as aid from the Zapatistas for their resistance against the North American blockade. Or perhaps there might be a place closer to here where it could be delivered, because it's always such a long distance to Mexico City, and what if 'Chompiras' were to break down and we'd end up in bad shape. And that will happen when the harvest comes in, which is turning green right now in the fields, and if they don't attack us, because if we were to send it during these next few months, it would be nothing but corncobs, and they don't turn out well even in tamales, better in November or December, it depends.

And we are also going to make an agreement with the women's crafts cooperatives in order to send a good number of *bordados*, embroidered pieces, to the Europes which are perhaps not yet Union, and perhaps we'll also send some organic coffee from the Zapatista cooperatives, so that they can sell it and get a little money for their struggle. And, if it isn't sold, then they can always have a little cup of coffee and talk about the antineoliberal struggle, and if it's a bit cold then they can cover themselves up with the Zapatista bordados, which do indeed resist quite well being laundered by hand and by rocks, and, besides, they don't run in the wash.

And we are also going to send the Indigenous brothers and sisters of Bolivia and Ecuador some non-transgenic maize, and we just don't know where to send them so they arrive complete, but we are indeed willing to give this little bit of aid.

3. And to all of those who are resisting throughout the world, we say there must be other intercontinental encuentros held, even if just one other. Perhaps December of this year or next January, we'll have to think about it. We don't want to say just when, because this is about

our agreeing equally on everything, on where, on when, on how, on who. But not with a stage where just a few speak and all the rest listen, but without a stage, just level and everyone speaking, but orderly, otherwise it will just be a hubbub and the words won't be understood, and with good organization everyone will hear and jot down in their notebooks the words of resistance from others, so then everyone can go and talk with their compañeros and compañeras in their worlds. And we think it might be in a place that has a very large jail, because what if they were to repress us and incarcerate us, and so that way we wouldn't be all piled up, prisoners, yes, but well organized, and there in the jail we could continue the intercontinental encuentros for humanity and against neoliberalism. Later on we'll tell you what we shall do in order to reach agreement as to how we're going to come to agreement. Now that is how we're thinking of doing what we want to do in the world. Now follows. . .

In Mexico. . .

1. We are going to continue fighting for the Indian peoples of Mexico, but now not just for them and not with only them, but for all the exploited and dispossessed of Mexico, with all of them and all over the country. And when we say all the exploited of Mexico, we are also talking about the brothers and sisters who have had to go to the United States in search of work in order to survive.

2. We are going to go to listen to, and talk directly with, without intermediaries or mediation, the simple and humble of the Mexican people, and, according to what we hear and learn, we are going to go about building, along with those people who, like us, are humble and simple, a national program of struggle, but a program which will be clearly of the left, or anticapitalist, or antineoliberal, or for justice, democracy, and liberty for the Mexican people.

3. We are going to try to build, or rebuild, another way of doing politics, one which once again has the spirit of serving others, without material interests, with sacrifice, with dedication, with honesty, which keeps its word, whose only payment is the satisfaction of duty performed, or like the militants of the left did before, when they were not stopped by blows, jail or death, let alone by dollar bills.

4. We are also going to go about raising a struggle in order to demand that we make a new Constitution, new laws which take into account the demands of the Mexican people, which are: housing, land, work, food, health, education, information, culture, independence, democracy, justice, liberty, and peace. A new Constitution which recognizes the rights and liberties of the people, and which defends the weak in the face of the powerful.

TO THESE ENDS . . .

The EZLN will send a delegation of its leadership in order to do this work throughout the national territory and for an indefinite period of time. This Zapatista delegation, along with those organizations and persons of the left who join in this Sixth Declaration of the Lacandón Jungle, will go to those places where they are expressly invited.

We are also letting you know that the EZLN will establish a policy of alliances with nonelectoral organizations and movements which define themselves, in theory and practice, as being of the left, in accordance with the following conditions:

Not to make agreements from above to be imposed below, but to make accords to go together to listen and to organize outrage. Not to raise movements which are later negotiated behind the backs of those who made them, but to always take into account the opinions of those participating. Not to seek gifts, positions, advantages, public positions, from the Power or those who aspire to it, but to go

beyond the election calendar. Not to try to resolve from above the problems of our Nation, but to build FROM BELOW AND FOR BELOW an alternative to neoliberal destruction, an alternative of the left for Mexico.

Yes to reciprocal respect for the autonomy and independence of organizations, for their methods of struggle, for their ways of organizing, for their internal decision making processes, for their legitimate representations. And yes to a clear commitment for joint and coordinated defense of national sovereignty, with intransigent opposition to attempts to privatize electricity, oil, water and natural resources.

In other words, we are inviting the unregistered political and social organizations of the left, and those persons who lay claim to the left and who do not belong to registered political parties, to meet with us, at the time, place and manner in which we shall propose at the proper time, to organize a national campaign, visiting all possible corners of our Patria, in order to listen to and organize the word of our people. It is like a campaign, then, but very otherly, because it is not electoral.

• • •

Brothers and Sisters:

This is our word which we declare:

In the world, we are going to join together more with the resistance struggles against neoliberalism and for humanity.

And we are going to support, even if it's but little, those struggles.

And we are going to exchange, with mutual respect, experiences, histories, ideas, dreams.

In Mexico, we are going to travel all over the country, through the ruins left by the neoliberal wars and through those resistances which, entrenched, are flourishing in those ruins.

We are going to seek, and to find, those who love these lands and these skies even as much as we do.

We are going to seek, from La Realidad to Tijuana, those who want to organize, struggle, and build what may perhaps be the last hope this Nation has of not dying, which has been going on at least since the time when an eagle alighted on a nopal in order to devour a snake.

We are going for democracy, liberty, and justice for those of us who have been denied it.

We are going with another politics, for a program of the left and for a new Constitution.

We are inviting all Indigenous, workers, campesinos, teachers, students, housewives, neighbors, small businesspersons, small shop owners, micro-businesspersons, pensioners, handicapped persons, religious men and women, scientists, artists, intellectuals, young persons, women, old persons, homosexuals and lesbians, boys and girls—to participate, whether individually or collectively, directly with the Zapatistas in this NATIONAL CAMPAIGN for building another way of doing politics, for a program of national struggle of the left, and for a new Constitution.

And so this is our word as to what we are going to do and how we are going to do it. You will see whether you want to join.

And we are telling those men and women who are of good heart and intent, who are in agreement with this word we are bringing out, and who are not afraid, or who are afraid but who control it, to then state publicly whether they are in agreement with this idea we are presenting, and in that way we will see once and for all who and how and where and when this new step in the struggle is to be made.

While you are thinking about it, we say to you that today, in the sixth month of the year 2005, the men, women, children and old ones of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation have now decided, and we have now subscribed to, this Sixth Declaration of the Lacandón Jungle, and those who know how to sign, signed, and those who did not left their mark, but there are fewer now who do not know how, because education has advanced here in this territory in rebellion for humanity and against neoliberalism, that is in Zapatista skies and land.

And this was our simple word sent out to the noble hearts of those simple and humble people who resist and rebel against injustices all over the world.

Democracy! Liberty! Justice!

From the mountains of the Mexican Southeast
Clandestine Revolutionary Indigenous Committee
General Command of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation.

Mexico, June 2005

Jose Luis, *El Mundoun Nave*, undated. Courtesy of EDELO.

THE OTHER PLAYER

SUBCOMANDANTE INSURGENTE MARCOS

A good noontime to all:

We'd like to express our appreciation to the National School of Anthropology and History for giving us the opportunity to say our word alongside these people who in addition to giving light to words, are also human beings accompanying a struggle written solely by humanity's greatest.

Starting this talk isn't easy.

And it's not just because these luminaries who are with us shine so brightly they leave barely any dark places, favored haunts of the shadows that we are. It's also because an impertinent beetle wouldn't let me prepare anything calm and sensible, interrupting me with all sorts of absurd incomprehensible stuff.

Maybe you've heard of him before: the self-styled Don Durito of the Lacandona, with his self-appointed mission, as he puts it, to right wrongs and succor the poor and weak? For some reason beyond my comprehension, Durito has deemed that I too am of the poor and weak and that my whole life is an injustice.

You know, what's been keeping me awake all these days isn't the volume of [Vicente] Fox's contradictions or the death threats so generously extended to us by the National Action Party. No, it's Durito, who keeps insisting that the bus is not a bus but a ship, and that the march can't be marching but is sailing because it is buoyed by the sea.

But what little I can make out, Durito's going to the rock concert that's happening today in the Zócalo where, we are told, Joaquín Sabina, Maldita Vecindad, Santa Sabina, and Panteón Rococó will be participating, as well as a good number of young people.

But like everything else on this march, that's a story to come.

In the world of culture and the arts, Zapatismo has found generous ears and echoes that speak their dignity. In music—especially rock—and in the visual and dramatic arts, in literature and in science, we find good people, human beings, following their own paths of dignity. So we'd like to take advantage of this event to give our regards to all those men and women who fight for humanity through cultural work.

To speak like Zapatistas about the paths of dignity we will tell a story called "The Other Player":

In their solemn corner, the players
control the slow pieces. The board
holds them until dawn in its strict
field where two colors despise each other.

[. . .]

When the players are gone,
when time's consumed them,
the rite itself has not stopped.

[. . .]

The player too is a prisoner
(sentenced by Omar) on another board
of the black nights and white days.
God moves the player, and he the piece.
What God behind God opens the play
of dust and time and dream and suffering?

—Jorge Luis Borges, "Chess"

Here's the story:

A group of players is engrossed in an important professional chess match. An Indigenous man approaches, observes it, and asks them what they are playing. No one answers him. The man goes closer to the board and considers the possibilities of the chessmen, the stern, grim faces of the players, the air of anticipation in the gathering around them. He repeats his question. One player takes the trouble to answer: "It's something you could never understand. It's a game for people of substance and learning."

The Indigenous man keeps quiet, but also keeps watching the board and the opponents' moves. After a while, he ventures another question: "Why do you keep playing when you already know who's going to win?"

The same player who answered before tells him: "You'd never understand. This is for masters. It's beyond your mental reach."

The Indigenous man says nothing. He looks some more and then he leaves. A little while later, he comes back, carrying something with him. With no more words, he goes up to the game table and sets an old mud-covered boot in the middle of the board. The players, taken aback, angrily stare at him. With a cunning smile, the Indigenous man asks: "Check?"

End of story.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, the English poet of the cusp of the eighteenth century, wrote: "If a man were to cross through Paradise in a dream, and they gave him a flower as proof that he had been there, and if, upon awakening, he were to find that flower in his hand . . . what then?"

In this March of Indigenous Dignity, we Zapatistas have seen part of the map of the national tragedy that is not broadcast on primetime radio or television news programs. Any of those present here might argue that what we saw has no merit whatsoever, and that a march wasn't necessary in order to realize that the Mexico of below is the majority, in numbers and in poverty.

But I did not come to talk about poverty rates, about constant repression, or about deceptions.

During this march, the Zapatistas have also seen part of rebel Mexico, and this seeing themselves and seeing others is nothing other than dignity. The *Mexico of below*, especially the Indigenous, speaks to us of a history of struggle and resistance that comes from afar and that beats everywhere in the present. It is a history that looks forward.

From the mountains of the Mexican Southeast to the Zócalo of Mexico City, the Zapatistas have crossed a territory of rebellion that has given us a flower of dark dignity as proof that we were there. We have reached the center of power, and we find that we have the flower in our hands, and the question, as in Coleridge, is "What then?"

Contrary to what the columnists of the political class might suppose, the question does not refer to what follows, but rather to what that dark flower means. And above all, to what it will mean in the future.

I know that in these times of modernity, when intellectual quotients are replaced by bank accounts, poetry by advertising spots, and science by verbal diarrhea, speaking of dreams can only sound anachronistic.

Nonetheless, the struggle of the Indian people for their dignity is fundamentally a dream—indeed, a very otherly dream.

The Indigenous struggle in Mexico is a dream that not only dreams the tomorrow that includes the color of the earth, it is also and above all, a dream that fights to hasten the possibility of that tomorrow.

We Indian people have reappeared precisely when what they have denied us has seemed strongest and most solid. And our dream has already foretold that the monuments neoliberalism is erecting to itself are nothing but future ruins.

The power wants to ensnare the Indigenous struggle in nostalgia, chest beating, and the "boom" in folk crafts. It wants to fence the Indian struggle within the framework of the past, using fashionable marketing language like "The past reaches out to us with its unpaid accounts." As if settling these accounts would be the effective solvent for wiping out that past, and then the "today, today, today" that Fox used as an election platform and uses as a government program could reign without any problems. The same "today" that neoliberalism has converted into a new religious faith.

If we warn that they are trying to make the Indigenous movement fashionable, we are not referring only to the public relations efforts that are trying to contain it.

After all, fashion is nothing more than a return to a past whose final horizon is the present, the today, right now, the fleeting moment.

In the struggle for dignity, there is an apparent turn to the past, but—and this is fundamental—the final horizon is the future.

• • •

Mexico's Indigenous struggle has not come to turn back the clock. It is not about returning to the past and declaiming, in an emotional

and inspired voice, that "all previous times were better." I believe they would have tolerated, and even applauded, that.

No, we Indian peoples have come in order to wind the clock and to thus ensure that the inclusive, tolerant, and plural tomorrow—which is, incidentally, the only tomorrow possible—will arrive.

In order to do that, in order for our march to make the clock of humanity march, we Indian people have resorted to the art of reading what has not yet been written. Because that is the dream that animates us as Indigenous, as Mexicans, and, above all, as human beings. With our struggle, we are reading the future which has already been sown yesterday, which is being cultivated today, and which can be reaped only if one fights—if, that is, one dreams.

To the skepticism made state doctrine, to neoliberal indifference, to the cynical realism of globalization, we Indian people have countered with memory, the word, and the dream.

By throwing ourselves into this fight with everything we've got, the Mexican Indigenous, as individuals and as a collective, have operated with a universally human impulse, that of *rebellion*. It has made us a thousand times better than before, and it has turned us into a historic force, not for its significance in terms of books or monuments, but for its ability to make history, in lower case. The key to the story of "The Other Player" isn't the old mud-filled boot that interrupts and subverts the *señores*-of-power-and-money's media chess game and the game of those who transform politics into an art of feints and ruses. The key is the smile the Indigenous smiles because he knows something. He knows that the other player, which is himself, is missing, and that the other player—which is not himself, but is still other—is also missing. But most of all, he knows that the fight is not over and that we haven't lost. He knows that it has barely begun. And he knows not because he knows but because he dreams.

In short, we Indigenous aren't part of yesterday. We're part of tomorrow.

And boots, culture, and tomorrows remind us of something we wrote some time ago, looking back and dreaming ahead.

"A boot is a boot that has lost its way and that's looking for what all boots long for, a bare foot."

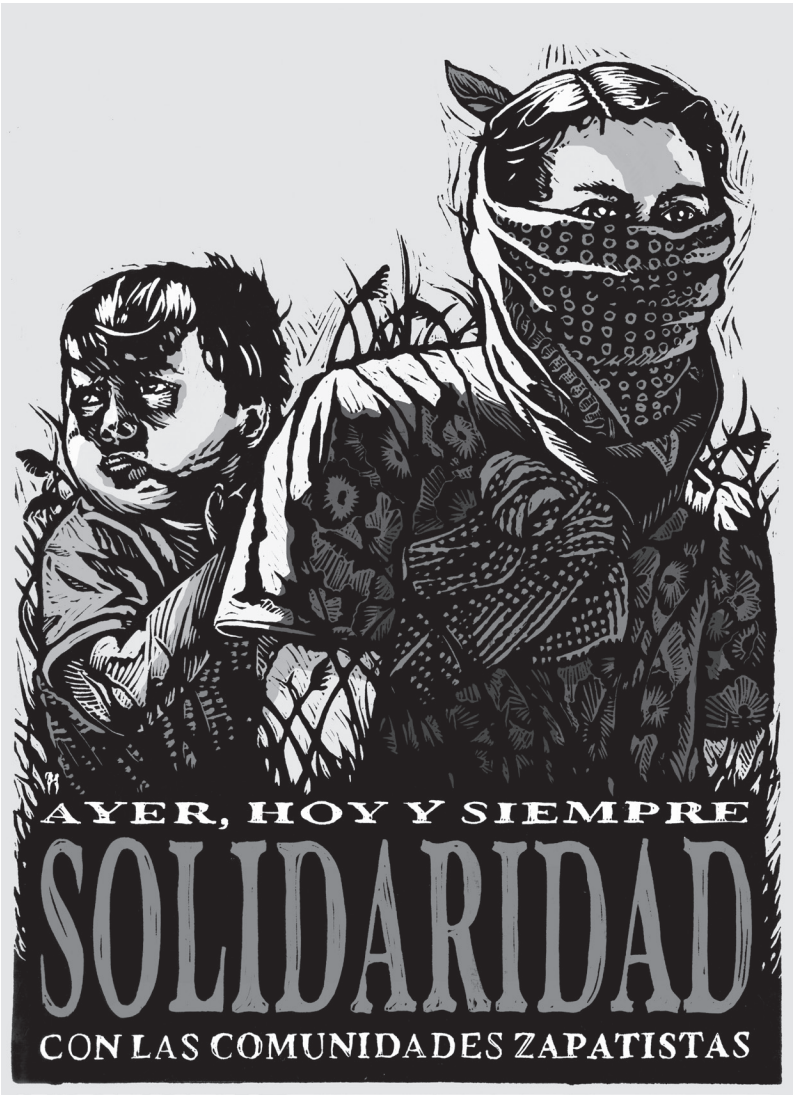
And that's why it occurs to me that in the morning that we dream, there'll be no boots or jeans or soldiers, but there will be bare feet, which is how feet should be when morning is just beginning.

Thank you.

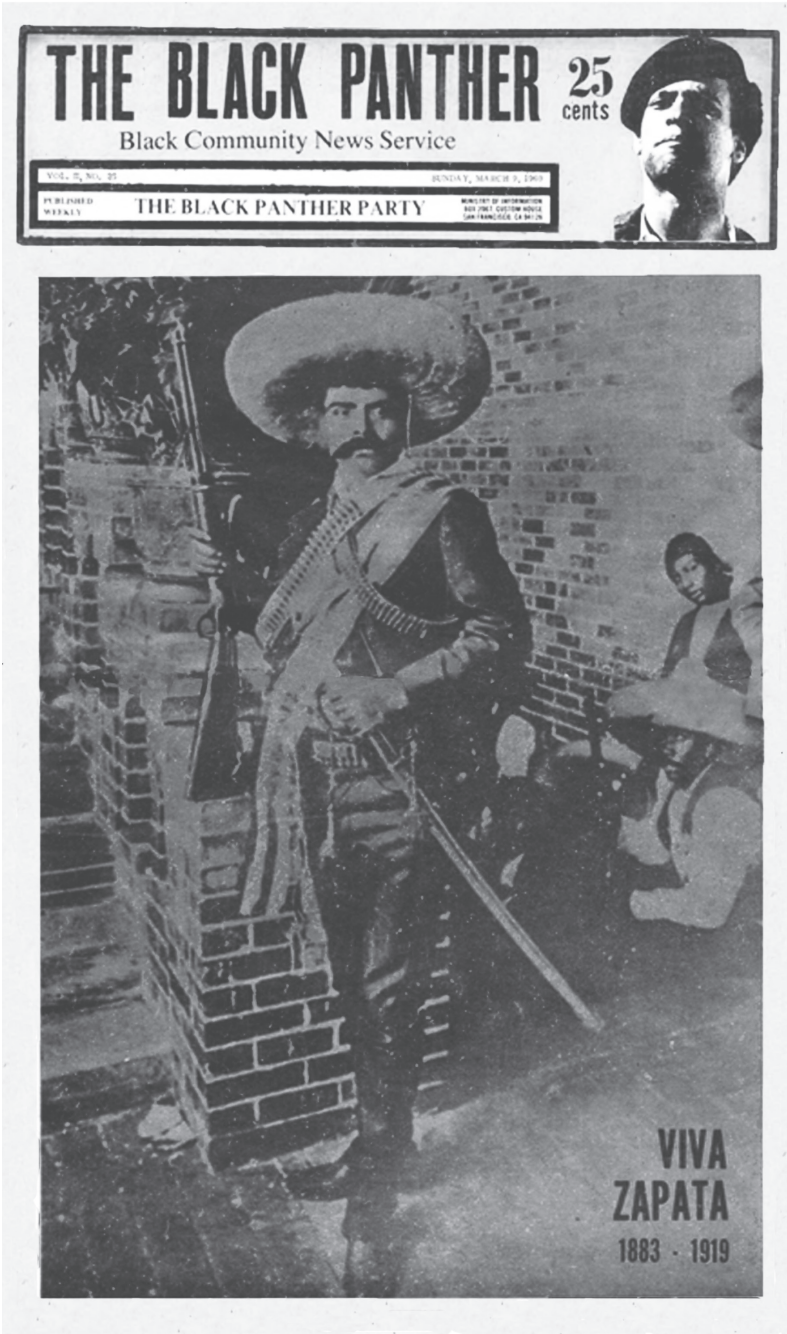
From the National School of Anthropology and History
Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos

P.S. I know it might be disconcerting to some that, in speaking of culture from the Indigenous point of view, I turn to other voices, in this case Borges and Coleridge, but that is how I remind myself, and remind you, that culture is a bridge for everyone, above calendars and borders, and, as such, must be defended. And so we say, and say to ourselves, no to cultural hegemony, no to cultural homogeneity, and no to any form of hegemony and homogeneity.

This text was presented by Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos at the "Paths of Dignity: Indigenous Rights, Memory and Cultural Heritage" intercultural meeting, organized by the National School of Anthropology and History, March 12, 2001. The original works of Subcomandante Marcos are not copyrighted.



Mazatl (Santiago Armengod), *Solidaridad con las Comunidades Zapatistas [Solidarity with the Zapatista Communities]*, 2012. Full-color offset poster, 22 x 34. Courtesy of Mazatl and Justseeds.



Cover of *The Black Panther* newspaper, March 9, 1969. Courtesy of Billy X Jennings and the Black Panther Party archives (itsabouttimebpp.com).

CONTRIBUTORS

Emory Douglas is former Revolutionary Artist and Minister of Culture for the Black Panther Party, from February 1967 until its discontinuation in the early 1980s. Douglas' art and design concepts were always seen on the front and back pages of *The Black Panther* newspaper, reflecting the politics of the Black Panther Party and the concerns of the community. Joining forces with Black Panther cofounders Bobby Seale and Huey P. Newton, Douglas was foundational in shaping the Party's visual and cultural power and sustaining one of its most ambitious and successful endeavors.

His work has been displayed at the 2008 Biennale of Sydney, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts and the African American Art & Cultural Complex in San Francisco, the Richmond Art Center, and the Station Museum of Contemporary Art in Houston. Other exhibitions were held at Urbis, Manchester; the New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York; the Elam School of Fine Art, Auckland; the Beirut Lebanon Art Center; and Showroom MAMA, Rotterdam. His work has appeared in *Art in America*, *PRINT* magazine, *Juxtapoz*, *American Legacy* magazine and the *American Institute of Public Arts*. His work is featured in the publi-

cation *Black Panther: The Revolutionary Art of Emory Douglas* (Rizzoli, 2007), edited by Sam Durant.

Caleb Duarte Piñon lives and works between the San Francisco Bay Area and San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas, Mexico. He studied at Fresno City College and is a graduate of the San Francisco Art Institute and the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. He was appointed as Oakland Arts Commissioner by then Mayor Jerry Brown in 2006. He has exhibited work at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, Red Dot Art Fair in New York, the Sullivan Galleries in Chicago, Jack Fisher Gallery in San Francisco, Gallery 727 in Los Angeles, the California Museum of Art in Oakland, the Fresno Art Museum, and many others. He has given talks in such places as the De Young Museum and the Mexican Museum in San Franscisco, the University of the Dirt in Chiapas, the University of Social Science in Tuxla, the California Institute of Integral Studies, and the 2012 Creative Time Summit in New York. He has created public works and community performances at the World Social Forum in Mumbai, India, in Santiago de Cuba, Chile, at El Pital, Honduras, in Mexico City, and throughout the US. His work has been reviewed by the *Los Angeles Times*, *Art Ltd*, *The San Francisco Chronicle*, and SPARK public television. Duarte is cofounder and director of EDELO (En Donde Era la ONU [Where the United Nations Used to Be]), a house of art in movement and an intercommunal artist residency. Situated in Chiapas, Mexico, the space invites participants with diverse practices to live and create. He is co-curator of the Zapantera Negra project.

Rigo 23 (Ricardo Gouveia) is a visual artist and activist who works in diverse media, often in collaborative and public settings. Born on the Portuguese Island of Madeira, he has been based in California since the mid 1980s. For three decades he has worked closely with individuals

and communities dealing with the consequences of ongoing institutional and historical injustice. He is particularly known for work that highlights the politics and political prisoners of the Black Panthers, from the Angola Three to Mumia Abu-Jamal, and the American Indian Movement's Leonard Peltier. He is one of the founding members of the Clarion Alley Mural Project and is an occasional professor at the San Francisco Art Institute.

Saúl Kak is an artist based in El Rayón, Chiapas. Born in 1985 in Guayabal, Rayón, he is of Indigenous descent and a representative of the Zoque communities in Chiapas. He studied painting at the School of Art and Science in Tuxtla Gutiérrez, the state capital of Chiapas, and completed a B.A. in Arts at the University of Guanajuato. He has participated in numerous exhibitions, making performances, films, and community paintings with both Zapatista and immigrant communities throughout Mexico. His work combines the knowledge and stories of the Zoque people to the effects of globalization and hyper-capitalism. He is currently working on a feature film about the Zoque and is traveling throughout Mexico, following the Central American migration routes to the United States.

Marc James Léger is an independent scholar based in Montreal. His essays in art criticism and cultural theory have appeared in dozens of magazines and journals. He is editor of the collected writings and interviews of Bruce Barber in *Performance, [Performance] and Performers* (YYZ BOOKS, 2007) and *Littoral Art and Communicative Action* (Common Ground, 2013). He is also editor of *Culture and Contestation in the New Century* (Intellect, 2011) and *The Idea of the Avant Garde—And What It Means Today* (Manchester University Press, 2014). He is author of *Brave New Avant Garde: Essays on Contemporary Art and Politics* (Zero Books, 2012), *The Neoliberal Undead: Essays on*

Contemporary Art and Politics (Zero Books, 2013) and *Drive in Cinema: Essays on Film, Theory and Politics* (Intellect, 2015).

Mia Eve Rollow is a project-based artist who works with social sculpture, performance, installation, video, sound, drawing and cartoons. She is also an organizer and curator and has created both solo and community works for projects in Mexico, the United States, Italy, Portugal, Canada and Hong Kong. She is a graduate of the University of Maryland and the School of the Arts Institute of Chicago, where she received a Master's degree in Sculpture. In 2007 she suffered a spinal cord injury and subsequently undertook seven months of healing and survival by bringing together the resources of art and life. Much of her work is informed by this experience. In 2009 she moved to Chiapas, Mexico, where she cofounded EDELO with her collaborator Caleb Duarte Piñon. She is currently artistic codirector in rotation for the Red Poppy House in San Francisco, California.

David Tomas is an artist, anthropologist, and writer. His production in the visual arts has its roots in a post-1970s critique of conceptual art's disciplinary infrastructure. For the last forty years Tomas' work has explored the nature and functions of different forms of knowledge that are produced at the interface of the history of contemporary art, the history and anthropology of media and the cultures, and transcultures of imaging technologies. Both in visual work and his writings Tomas has conducted this exploration within a framework in which art is considered to be a discipline that operates in tension with the other disciplines that constitute the university's knowledge matrix. He has exhibited in Canada, the US, and Europe and has held visiting research and fellowship positions at the California Institute of the Arts, Goldsmiths College and the National Gallery of Canada. He is the author of several books, including *Transcultural Space and Transcultural*

Beings (Westview, 1996), *A Blinding Flash of Light: Photography Between Disciplines and Media* (Dazibao, 2004), *Beyond the Image Machine: A History of Visual Technologies* (Continuum, 2004), *Escape Velocity: Alternative Instruction Prototype for Playing the Knowledge Game* (Wedge, 2012), and *Vertov, Snow, Farocki: Machine Vision and the Posthuman* (Bloomsbury, 2013). Tomas is Professor in Visual Arts at the Université du Québec à Montréal.

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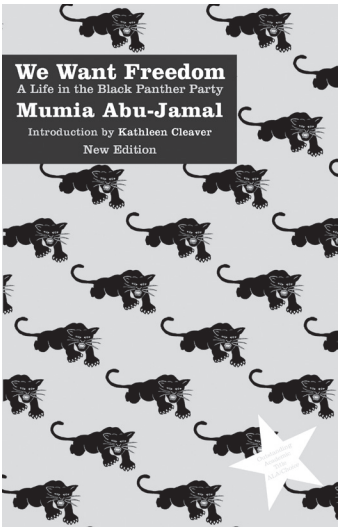

We Want Freedom:
A Life in the Black Panther Party

Mumia Abu-Jamal
Introduction by Kathleen Cleaver

978-1-942173-04-5
$20.00

Mumia Abu-Jamal, America's most famous political prisoner, is internationally known for his "live from death row" radio broadcasts and writings. In his youth, he helped found the Philadelphia branch of the Black Panther Party, wrote for the national newspaper, and began his lifelong work of exposing the violence of the state as it manifests in entrenched poverty, endemic racism, and unending police brutality.

We Want Freedom combines Mumia's memories of day-to-day life in the Party with analysis of the history of Black liberation struggles. Applying his poetic voice and unsparing critical gaze, Mumia constructs a vivid and compelling picture of the Black Panther Party and its legacy, focusing on the ordinary men and women who were the Party, as much as on the leadership.

As calls that Black lives matter grow louder, Mumia connects the historical dots between contemporary struggles and the Panthers' demand for the "immediate end to police brutality and the murder of Black people." By locating the Black Panthers in a struggle centuries old, and in the personal memories of a young man, Mumia Abu-Jamal helps us to understand—and to demand—freedom.

• • •

"A moving, incisive, and thorough history of the Black Panther Party. This book is required reading for anyone who would seek to understand race, revolution, and repression in the United States." —Amy Goodman, journalist and host of Democracy Now!

"An urgent exposition of the long history of the Black Radical Tradition. Rich in historical detail and still attuned to ongoing contemporary discussions concerning Black liberation, We Want Freedom provides a new generation of activists, radicals, and revolutionaries with the politics and clarity necessary to sustain today's movement." —Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, author of *From #BlackLives-Matter to Black Liberation*

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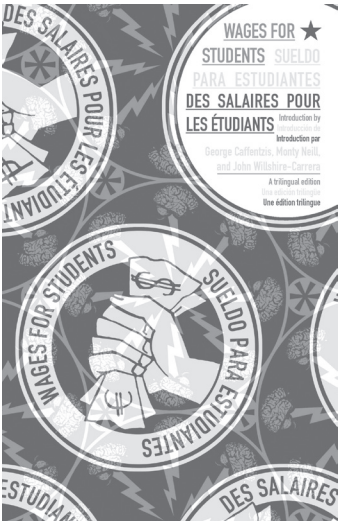


Wages for Students |Sueldo para estudiantes | Des salaires pours les étudiants

978-1-942173-02-1
$13.95

Wages for Students was published anonymously by three activists in the fall of 1975. It was written as "a pamphlet in the form of a blue book" by activists linked to the journal *Zerowork* during student strikes in Massachusetts and New York.

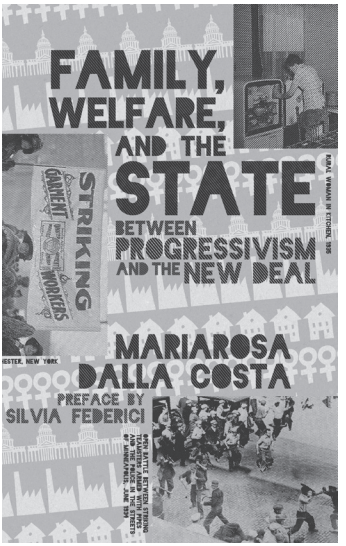
Deeply influenced by the Wages for Housework Campaign's analysis of capitalism, and relating to struggles such as Black Power, anticolonial resistance, and the antiwar movements, the authors fought against the role of universities as conceived by capital and its state. The pamphlet debates the strategies of the student movement at the time and denounces the regime of forced unpaid work imposed every day upon millions of students. *Wages for Students* was an affront to and a campaign against the neoliberalization of the university, at a time when this process was just beginning. Forty years later, the highly profitable business of education not only continues to exploit the unpaid labor of the students, but now also makes them pay for it. Today, when the student debt situation has us all up to our necks, and when students around the world are refusing to continue this collaborationism, we again make this booklet available "for education against education."

This new trilingual edition includes an introduction by George Caffentzis, Monty Neill, and John Willshire-Carrera alongside a transcript of a collective discussion organized by Jakob Jakobsen, Malav Kanuga, Ayreen Anastas, and Rene Gabri, following a public reading of the pamphlet by George Caffentzis, Silvia Federici, Cooper Union students, and other members and friends of 16 Beaver.

• • •

WE ARE FED UP WITH WORKING FOR FREE. WE MUST FORCE CAPITAL, WHICH PROFITS FROM OUR WORK, TO PAY FOR OUR SCHOOLWORK. ONLY IN THIS WAY CAN WE SEIZE MORE POWER TO USE IN OUR DEALINGS WITH CAPITAL.

MORE FROM COMMON NOTIONS



Family, Welfare, and the State: Between Progressivism and the New Deal

Mariarosa Dalla Costa

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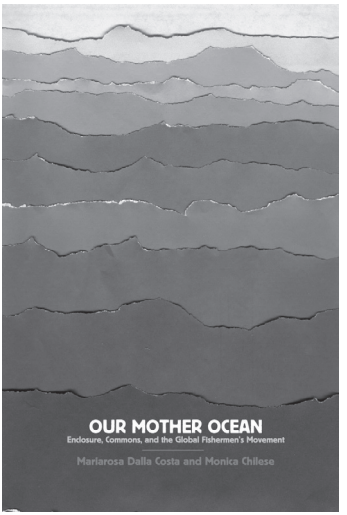
"Dalla Costa shows that with the New Deal, the state began to plan the 'social factory'—that is, the home, the family, the school, and above all women's labor, on which the productivity and pacification of industrial relations was made to rest. Family, Welfare and the State leaves no doubt that the New Deal was not only the last resort to 'save capitalism' from the danger of working class revolution, but was also in essence a productivity deal that was structured to maintain a patriarchal and racist order." —Silvia Federici, from the Preface



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